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Mary Sullivan

Inishgill

ONLY THE BLAUGHANS wore life-jackets, bright orange ones guaranteed to float them face upwards whatever else happened. Their jerseys, corduroys and boots were as proper to the journey on the bucking trawler, still slimy from the last catch, and their five oilskins were rolled in the bag on which the baby was sitting. He and his father were particularly satisfied with their clothes; Connor because of the noise his boots made when rubbed together at the heels, Brian Blaughan because he felt a pleasant and unaccustomed communion with his family, dressed like them but in a sensible way. He looked over the water to the quay, where their red van was being backed off by the man who served them in the pub, but before Brian saw what happened to the crate of Guinness and the little boy in the van's path, the boat changed course in its violent way, rounded the headland, and plunged upon the open sea.

Kathleen took hold of her daughter's sleeve, and turned to see that Ruairi was safe. She could not hear what he was asking the boatman; Mr Gallagher seemed to answer seldom, but himself listened seriously to what the many children clustered round the steering wheel, pointing and shouting, were telling the newcomer. The pitching of the boat had become quite theatrical, as they dashed into a mist which damped and chilled them in a minute.

"Raincoats, I think, oilskins," said Brian, tipping Connor off his seat and handing out the yellow capes. Fearing to stand up, they struggled to dress on the jumping deck, Connor weeping because a brass eyelet scratched his nose.

"Don't winge, now," said Kathleen, and she gave him a secret, vicious little shake before lifting him on to her lap. They were all tired by the long drive from Dublin shut up together. Norla, who had spoken of nothing but the island for the last three days, leaned against her mother in silence, staring into the mist. Ruairi came to them sideways, holding onto the gunwale with both hands, except when he had to climb round huddled passengers. One, a priest with terrific eyebrows, handed him across the last bit to Kathleen.

"There you are, my man," he said, smiling at her by Ruairi's ear.

"Mr Gallagher says, can I have my raincoat please, Mr Gallagher says, it wouldn't matter if the mist stayed for ever, or if it were night entirely, he knows the way with his hat on his eyes, he hasn't a hat, there are sharks come in when the weather will be fine."

We look like a lot of puddings in a bag, thought Kathleen, looking at her family, oilskins over life-jackets. She felt foolish on behalf of them all, waterproof and seaworthy when no one else had any cover, and there was no sort of safety gear that she could see.

"That tallest boy, that one in the blue shirt, he says we would have to go the last part in the dinghy if the tide were down, but it's up, the tide is up, we can sail into the harbour and park there."

"Moor," said Brian.

"Moor into the harbour. And if the boat sank, we would have to get in the dinghy, they haven't any belts or rafts or anything like on the ferries, and Mr Gallagher can't swim, he thinks it's dangerous learning to swim, that boy says."

"I don't believe this swell will last," said the priest to Brian, "It's been flat calm for a week at least, and this looks just a tantrum. You'll be wanting to fish and swim, I expect?"

"Yes, the children have still to learn to

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swim, if it's not too cold, and I've promised the boy a day out in a boat."

"Oh, the young ones won't mind the cold, even though you do," said the priest, and sat back, digging his chin into his hard collar.

"Land," he said an hour later, when the mist suddenly thinned and vanished and they saw that they ran parallel to a dark fissured cliff, where the waves on which the boat swung travelled on to smash themselves.

"Norla, wake up, we're there!" cried Kathleen, but too soon, for they went on past hopeless rearing walls, and canyons in which the sea raved, for another forty minutes before the boat turned into the straits, immediately calm, that led to the harbour.

"Are we at the island now? Is this Inishgill?" asked Norla, looking doubtfully at the enormous church a few feet from the water.

"We are," said Father Maguire. He picked her up and passed her to Mr Gallagher on the green steps of the quay. "You'll be grand here, the five of you."

THE ISLAND SMELT of stone. Outside their cottage above the bay, swathes of grass and thistles lay in cut mounds at the gate; cows moved behind the hedge at the end of the up-hill garden; a donkey appeared out of the half-light in the lane that went down to the hotel. Still the smell borne in on the wind from the sea was of the stone that lay in tilted, ribbed slabs on the shore, littered the fields and tracks, and was piled into careful walls round the poor houses and patches. Kathleen leaned on the gate. She was waiting for the girl the O'Riordains were sending from the hotel, and when she heard a step coming up the lane, went quickly in to look at her sleeping children.

"Will I wash these things, Mrs Blaughan?" asked Rose Corcoran, decorously clearing the table of their evening dishes. A veil of hair hid her cheek.

"Yes, thank you, and as it's their first night, and it's strange, would you fetch us if they wake, the big boy will look after them while you're gone. The pub's open quite late, I'm sure?"

Amusement shot across the bland face. "It shuts when there's nothing more to drink, or when the last man goes to his home, or when Joseph Plunkett is tired."

"Well, we won't be very long. Is it right at the end of the lane?"

She took a turning to the right, but one that slanted back towards the spine of the island, away from the knot of life she was trying to reach. A few low houses loomed, but when she hurried towards them, the beam of her torch showed before she reached them that they were empty and tumble-down, roofless except where a neat fringe of tied stones weighted one thatch. She went back the way she had come, and saw that she had missed a pair of iron gates at the roadside, from which a flight of steps led down into what seemed to be a valley field, far below the level of the road. She shone her torch and saw tombstones, Celtic crosses and raised stone tables. On some grassy lumps there were plastic flowers with tags attached, formally arranged under transparent domes.

Father Maguire laid those people there for ever, those new ones. His cloth brought him to it, and his eyebrows gave him the courage; he spoke the words that finished, though he is hardly twenty-seven and his bright brown hair grows close as a coconut mat. And the flowers—Kathleen stopped. She had come to the path that ran down to the pub, and now could see the lamp over the door. Her torch wavered forwards; the light fell on three pairs of shoes, then three boys hand in hand, their backs pressed against a stony bank. She greeted them cheerfully, but they stood still and looked at her, their free hands invisible in the sleeves of their men's jackets.

The pub was full of men in serge suits with collarless shirts, or no shirts, some of them. Brian made no mention of her long absence but smiling took her hand and pulled her past a wedge of backs, into the corner where he was drinking alone.

"Don't turn round now, those two with the sunburn are Americans, Hoyt they're called, they're at the hotel. And the ones they're talking to have a cottage like ours, but they haven't a share in the generator; Herbert, I think they said, they live in London. And the gentleman with the stare when you came in says he's a writer; and the old fellow on the high stool with all the drink round is a famous man, Gerald Gallo, he remembers when there were a thousand people on the island."

Kathleen laughed. "And do they know our

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names and what you earn?"

"Oh I said—Mrs Leary, this is my wife, Kathleen. And Kathleen, this is Bernadette and Michael Leary. They're from Dublin also; Michael says his father used our textiles, he was an upholsterer."

Kathleen and the Learys murmured. "I saw you on the boat," said Kathleen. "Was that your boy with our big one?"

"Yes, we took the children to a horsefair today; we wished we hadn't the way the boat was going coming home."

Gerald Gallo was beckoning to Kathleen from behind Brian. Waving her hand at the Learys, she went to him.

"Your husband. Is a very nice man." Then he laughed and held up one of the six Guinnesses he had in line.

"He says you're a very nice man," she said to Brian, "but I don't see any sign of a drink for me."

It seemed that the Plunketts were never going to serve him again. Joseph pulled beer and said nothing, glancing severely at each customer once, to show that he had heard, and pausing for a swallow from his own glass each time he closed the till. Beattie ran between the two bars, collecting orders, stopping to hear a long story and tell another, returning to ask what were the drinks again. Some of the islanders clenched round the counter had been served more than once before it was Brian's turn, and then he got only half what he asked for. His neck seemed suddenly to grow longer.

"Mr Plunkett," he said loudly, "it was two on top of those I asked for, one for Mr Gallo and a half a one for my wife."

A quietness fell. The islanders slid glances round at Brian, and back into their beer. The visitors stared, then exchanged looks. Kathleen moved involuntarily a step away. In the second before the voices rose again, a young man came into the bar.

"I'll do it, Dadda," he murmured to Mr Plunkett, and to Brian he said soothingly, "This one will be the finish of Gerald tonight, it's the one he loves best, the one that's too many."

"It is, Micky," said Gerald Gallo, "but I wish I had one later, would trot to me by itself when I called."

Micky saw Kathleen and Brian laughing. The pleased smile he gave them seemed to Kathleen to find its way only to her, and startled her with its sweetness. She looked away in embarrassment, took the glass Brian handed her, dropped it, and plunged to pick up the broken pieces with shame and relief. In the corner again, their drinks before them, she watched Micky Plunkett slyly. She thought of a time when love and pity might issue at the single glance of a stranger, without confusion and without surprise to herself. Then Micky caught her, and she turned back to Brian with the blood rising in her face.

". . . And I spoke to Gallagher about it. We can go when the swell drops, and I think Hoyt's going to bring his boy too. I'll have some time with the children now, Kathleen, time all together, it will be good for us all."

They walked home along the dark track, followed all the way by the chugging of the hotel generator. Rose Corcoran was asleep over her book; Connor was asleep on the floor by his bed; the front door was open, and the stone smell stealing in.

"DID I FALL from my bed, then?" asked Connor in the morning. "What are we going to do now? I woke up and spoke to that Rose lady, will she look after us again?"

"I expect so; and we're going to walk to the end of the island. Did you like her?"

"Yes, I showed her my hay-baler. I don't want to walk anywhere."

But Connor walked almost to the northern tip of the island before holding up his arms to be carried. The path left the shore, ran into a wilderness of old peat cuttings, and disappeared. Between them and the last promontory lay a plain filled with neatly stepped mounds, overgrown, and each moated with tarry black water. Ruairi and Norla, who had been hiding and jumping out all the way along, were still. A bird, very high and seeming to rest on the wind, drifted over them with a long, creaking cry. Ruairi suddenly ran off, and following him, the others found the path to the far shore, leading home.

"Is that another island, Daddy?" he asked when they caught up with him.

"It must be St Bride's, that there's a map of at the hotel," Brian said. "Look, you can see where the street was."

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Half a mile away across a tossing race, where bands of dark green and dark blue water flew together, lay St Bride's. Beneath its beaky crests, a few broken houses in a row flanked a church that looked intact, and along the row, brown and white patches that were cattle moved very slowly.

"Could we go there in a boat?" asked Ruairi.

"What for?" answered Brian, walking on. "It's the same as this island, but empty."

"Might there be a horse there?" said Norla.

"Go on with you and your horse," said Kathleen, "What about all the donkeys walking about with nothing to do but carry the children?"

"Oh, but a horse," said Norla, trying to stare a horse into being on the far side of the water's turmoil.

"Gee up so!" shouted Connor on Kathleen's back, and drummed her hips with his heels until she ran down the road to Brian.

Half-way home they came to the general shop and post office.

"Take Connor while I go in a minute," said Kathleen, and left them on the sea wall.

All the Learys were inside, buying postcards and lemonade. The boy in the blue shirt saw Ruairi on the wall and went out to him, followed by four other children leaning together in an arguing knot. Bernadette Leary smiled in ownership of them, but Kathleen greeted her vaguely. She was thinking how sharply visiting families were outlined, compared with the obscure patterns of the islanders' lives. Outside, the Learys were mollified by Brian's possessive roar.

The post-mistress sorted out the Inishgill genealogy in fourteen minutes by the silver watch pinned to her black crêpe breast.

"Fifty years we have been in this house," she finished, "and now there is only my cousin's son, who will not be wanting to stay when I'm gone, he's away off to Galway half his time as it is, and I would certainly have gone myself if the chance ever came, though I hear the traffic is getting like Dublin. Four of these did you say?"

"Thank you, and one more thing I have to ask you," said Kathleen. "Is there a horse to ride on the island would suit a little girl? My Norla turns up her nose at the donkeys, you know, but she's dying to find a real horse."

"Well now, my cousin's boy does keep a sort of a pony that pulls a trap in the summer now and then," answered Miss Flynn, "I'll tell him tonight, and he'll give you an answer tomorrow."

Brian and Norla were skimming pebbles on the smooth sea; Connor, looking offended, was making a boulder tower.

"Connor isn't able," Norla began, but Brian gave her a sudden light slap, and took the little boy on his shoulders. First red and then white, Norla walked behind them, refusing to look at her father, or tell her mother what the quarrel had been about.

"Ruairi's gone with Sean Leary," said Brian, his pale face framed in Connor's red knees, "he missed Gallagher passing; I've fixed up the fishing for tomorrow."

FATHER MAGUIRE, five other priests and a nun were lunching on lobster at O'Riordain's. Tables were pushed together at their end of the room, plates clashing, voices raised. Mrs O'Riordain was waiting on them herself, with two of the girls; Rose Corcoran had to manage all the rest. The hotel guests and the families from the cottages were subdued; they sat in the lee of the clerical merriment, silent in the long pauses between courses, reproving their children for turning round to stare, and rousing up only when Mrs O'Riordain visited each table.

"It's Father Maguire's sister, and a party of missionary fathers on holiday, would you believe? They have to be off in a minute to catch the mail boat over."

Something about her made you behave, made you anxious to please, favoured by the notice, relieved when it passed on. There was an outburst of chattering when the priests had gone. The girls bringing in yellow blancmange listened with eyes turned down.

Max Hoyt called across to Brian, "You're on for tomorrow then, Gallagher tells me? David and Alice are coming, Susie says she'll take a rest maybe. Are all of you coming along on the trip?"

"No, only this one, with me," said Brian, his hand on Ruairi's hair.

"I said I'd go to St Bride's tomorrow, with Sean," Ruairi said in the polite, flat voice he used on the edge of tears.

Brian, hearing the note, was resolved. "We

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have to go when it's arranged for, it can't be done every day, you know. You were wild to go fishing when we talked about it at home, what's become of all that?" And he added when he saw Ruairi's face stiffening, "We can go to St Bride's another day, and ask Sean to come."

"I *promised*," said Ruairi miserably.

"Well, I promised too, so that's the end of it," said Brian, and he turned to the study of the menu of the meal he had just eaten. Ruairi keeled over sideways, very slowly, and laid his head in Kathleen's lap. Brian hissed at him, "That's a baby, Ruairi, sit up, Connor himself doesn't behave like that any more."

Michael Leary came over with Sean and rescued them.

"We'll take your man to St Bride's when he's been out in a fishing boat and knows which way to jump," he said with a wink at Brian, "and tomorrow we'll come fishing with you, in the other boat, if Gallagher thinks so."

It was all arranged. Michael Leary and Brian went to find the boatman, taking the two boys. Kathleen picked up Connor, who was half asleep, and she and Norla went back to the cottage. As they approached, the Plunketts' back door opened and Micky came out, rubbing his curly hair with a towel. He was short, and stood always hunched, his mouth slightly open as though his breathing were troublesome, a mature patience in his expression. Kathleen's arms tightened round Connor; she smiled at the youth as they passed him. A shriek came from inside the pub. Micky began to walk across the yard, still rubbing his head, when Beattie Plunkett rushed after him, seized him by the ear, and while both half laughed and half complained, drew him backwards into the pub.

Norla was astounded. "But what were they *doing*?" she kept asking as they toiled up the hill. "Was he naughty? Was that his mother? What were they laughing for?"

Their own gate came into sight. Connor's weight was pressing Kathleen back down the hill. "They were playing, love. He's nothing but a boy."

THEY WERE LATE for the fishing on Wednesday morning. Connor announced at the breakfast table that he wanted to go too, wanted to wear his orange life jacket, wanted to stay with his dadda. There was a light in Norla's eye. Connor took off his clothes as fast as they put them on him, and ran away up the hillside in nothing but a string vest. In the end Ruairi had to give him his own camouflage hat, and they all straggled down to the shore. Mr Gallagher and the Hoyts were in the one tar-painted boat, Vincent Gallagher and all the Learys in the other. Norla looked indignantly at her mother when she saw them. Connor charged into the shallow water, tried to kick Vincent's boat, and sprawled on his face in the foam. Vincent hauled him up and passed him bellowing to Kathleen.

"There now," he said calmly, "You'll be better before you're married."

Ruairi scrambled in with the Hoyts. Mr Gallagher held out his hand to Brian, but he refused it, raising his own to show that he was balanced, and fell heavily among the tackle. He was still untangling himself as the boats pulled away, the water lapping high on their sides. Connor had forgotten them before they were out of sight, but Kathleen could see that Norla was affronted, and feeling sorry for them all, she decided to tell her about the horse.

"But it's only maybe, mind, the horse isn't generally for riding, it may not turn out."

"Oh, let's ask now, let's get over there quick," said Norla, "he might have come, they might have brought him in the night."

But Kathleen walked on to the far side of the bay, where a smooth turf came down to the sand, flickering with rabbits, strewn with the island's stone.

In the middle of the afternoon she saw three currachs come to land on the opposite shore. The men got out and stood in their boots in the water, holding on to the surging prows as if to bridles, while Father Maguire and Micky Plunkett stepped down to them in cassocks and cottars. Micky stood back as the priest, reading from his missal, made the sign of the cross in the air above each boat. A few words reached Kathleen over the surf, the cottars fluttered, then the boats were away and brisk again before the church door opened and shut.

Idly watching them go, Kathleen saw one of the two fishermen in the last boat look up and point past her to the shore, shouting and

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waving. Connor! She ran towards the place where he had been playing with a pile of stones and shells, saw his bucket thrown down and ran gasping on, calling his name and Norla's. Several fishermen were shouting now, angrily, even, to Kathleen's ears. The ground dropped lower and Norla was suddenly revealed, struggling to stand upright a thick oar draped with a torn fishing net. Connor had scooped a hole in the shingle beneath an upturned currach, and was now creeping out of it clasping an orange float. Kathleen looked down at them. The fishermen were still watching, leaning on their oars.

"Take it down, put them back, don't play with them," she called to the children, "they have to be there, you mustn't touch them."

Norla began to let down the oar, but it was too heavy and fell with a crack on the stones beside Connor. He and Kathleen both screamed, and Norla began to cry.

"Look, put them back, put them the way they were," cried Kathleen, and she took the float from Connor and held it up so that the fishermen could see what she was doing. They gave no sign but to begin their clumsy, rolling rowing.

"This boat, it's like a tombstone, it's like a tablet on the wall," Kathleen said, "it means the man died, and they put his fishing things here because he'd not need them any more. Taking them out, it looks as though we haven't respect, you see?"

Connor stood with his hand on the prow; inverted and black, it looked like the hunched shoulders of an animal. He had understood none of what his mother said, but a tremor of anxiety passed through him. Kathleen replaced the net and floats under the boat, scraped back the stones and laid the oars alongside.

"Will anything happen?" muttered Norla.

"No, it was just that they saw it," said Kathleen, "it looked so bad. The man whose boat it was doesn't mind, but his folk do; it makes them sad, you see, when they left his things neat."

They trailed back along the beach. The post office was closed when they got there; an official notice in the window said:

COLLECTIONS: VARIABLE
DELIVERIES: VARIABLE

and below that a pencilled page stuck on the window said: Knock twice for Christy Glass. While they were knocking and calling, Christy came up behind them carrying a pail of milk, and added a couple of knocks himself.

"We'll fix it up tomorrow, Mrs Blaughan," he said when he heard what they wanted. "Aunty did say something about the old horse, but she wasn't clear what it was you were asking. I see it now, I'll look into it in the morning."

"Shall we come down then, Mr Glass?" asked Kathleen.

"I'll come by myself," said Norla softly, trying not to let Connor hear.

"Not at all, I'll be up, and I'll show you the fellow myself," said Christy.

On the way home Norla walked backwards in front of Kathleen, asking what would the horse eat, and how long would it stay, and could she plait its tail. The English couple were leaning over their gate; Peter Herbert put out a hand and caught Norla as she came by. Kathleen was glad to stop and talk. The children drifted away while she and the Herberts discussed their cottages, and the vagaries of the generator, and the Herberts' oil lamps. Norla came racing back.

"How long have you been married?" she asked, "Connor would like to know."

"*Norla*," began Kathleen, but Peter laughed, and said, "Five years."

Norla opened her mouth. She looked at Margaret Herbert, ran back to Connor, said something impatiently to him, and returned to the gate.

"Where are all your children then?" she said.

"Oh, where are *yours*?" said Kathleen to the child, and walked her off along the path, smiling back at the Herberts and shaking her head.

MEETING THEM NEXT MORNING in the lane, for some reason Kathleen felt obliged to explain herself to the Herberts.

"So when Christy Glass didn't turn up, I thought I'd come out for the morning, horse or no horse, and leave Brian and the children to look out for him. I'm hardly ever away. . . ."

The Herberts looked at her with surprise.

"Of course, three of them—"

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Margaret Herbert interrupted her husband, and laid a hand on Kathleen's arm. "There's a lovely walk to the holes that way, and better not take the children there, I should think."

Looking back a moment later, Kathleen saw them stepping out, arms linked and folded behind them. She wandered on. The sea-holes when she came to them were filled with the sound of the sea slogging in them, and huge stones moving. She was afraid to go very close to their lips, where the bright turf stopped so suddenly, and almost afraid to turn her back on them. The water sluicing there and that foreboding, tumbling roar could hardly be imagined as anywhere joining with the shimmering blue at the horizon. Another water, gleaming, drew her inland, to find a strip of lake lined with yellow irises. As she stood watching the breeze in their leaves, a voice came to her from the cottage garden behind her.

"It is a painting, if you had the skill."

She recognised Manus McAulay from Plunkett's, where he sat to the right of the darts boards, sometimes with a crony, but generally alone. In the bar he blushed and muttered when the local girls sat by him; they did it to provoke him. He came down to the gate. He was a huge man, whose every garment looked like someone else's come back from the wash. Even his filthy buttoned cap sat on his grey strands like a schoolboy's. His dog struggled to get over the wall to Kathleen, and pushed off some of the small top boulders.

"Get!" he said bad-temperedly, but gently took the stone Kathleen picked up and fitted it back into the wall.

"My brothers built that wall, the last thing they did before they went away, and when they come back, twice they've been now, one from Chicago and one from California, and all their families, they go straight to see it's still standing. Forty-two years."

The dog had got through somewhere; it sat on Kathleen's feet. She looked at the sailing clouds, and at their sharp reflections in the lake. She wanted to go, but settled to listen.

"I went off later on, I went to England, but I came home when my father died, and then I thought why would I go back? There was nothing to go back for. I was in Halifax over there; do you know that place?"

"I've been to England, but not that part," said Kathleen.

"I believe you. And now I'm here, I have the bit of house they had before me, and nothing else, not a part of what they had here."

There was some silence. McAulay held the gate with both hands and fixed his light hazel eyes on Kathleen.

"That Halifax, that was a terrible place to come from when the old one died. A policeman came at night, and I'd to go out, and get across to Liverpool, and over the sea, and down again. They said there was hurry, but there was no hurry, he was all the time in the church, and they were waiting on me for the funeral. I could have come twice as fast, or not at all, without difference to him. It's the priests, you see, stirring people up, to them seeing a father alive and seeing him in his coffin is the same thing."

"I saw the young priest blessing the boats yesterday," said Kathleen, to be pleasant.

"Well now, whether he blesses them or whether he doesn't, they sink just the same," said McAulay, turning away.

Kathleen waited for something better. McAulay moved towards his open door, beyond which a fire smoked under a hanging kettle. There was a little cream jug on the table, and a bread-knife on the green check cloth.

"Good morning, now, Mr McAulay," Kathleen called.

He faced her in his doorway, smiling again and pointing to the lake.

"It is a picture though."

SHE SAW HIM AGAIN that evening in his corner at Plunkett's, talking to Christy Glass. Christy took the whisky Brian fetched, and turned to the Blaughans, but McAulay sent his back and had it changed for beer, scarcely nodding to Brian, even when he handed him the change.

"Now that's rude," said Christy in an offended tone. "He had no manners at all. You will have to forgive him, Mr Blaughan, he's not one for company, though he's no objection to the company buying a jar."

"Oh well," said Brian, "we have felt very welcome here."

"Yes, people like the visitors to come,"

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answered Christy, "but they like them to go, too; if they stayed it might not be liked so well." He gave Brian and Kathleen his smile.

"Mr Glass," said Kathleen, putting herself to it, "we were wondering if there's any news of the horse? Our Norla is looking forward to it so much—".

"Mrs *Blaughan*," said Christy, putting down his glass and clasping his hands, "the man who shoes the little horse for me is over at St Bride's, seeing after the cattle there, he won't be home till Saturday. Now will I run up on Saturday night and tell the little girl when the horse can be ready, or will I see you here?"

"Here would be best," said Kathleen quickly, "I'm sure Brian will be here, even if I don't come. We don't know what to do with her she so keeps on."

"Well, I think it will be Monday, but I'll be letting you know. You're coming to the dance, I hope?"

"Perhaps we will," said Brian, watching Christy empty his glass, "I don't know if Rose will be available, she'll be wanting to go herself."

"I'll be there with my old accordion," said Christy over his shoulder, going away, "we'll move your feet all right."

"I doubt that man is ever going to buy a drink," said Brian. "He shall, though."

"Oh, leave it, Brian," said Kathleen irritably, "what is it really to you?"

"No, he shall," said Brian, shaking off her hand, "You go on home if you like, but I'm not going to be the ninny here."

She knew the path home in the dark now. Something glimmered at the gate: it was Micky Plunkett waiting for her. But he was talking to Rose. He grinned, and hung about for a while, and went away whistling when they had gone in.

"I expect you'll be going to the dance on Sunday, Rose," said Kathleen. "We'd like to look in. I wonder if another of the girls would like to step round for a while?"

"Angela Bray will do it for you I'm sure, Mrs Blaughan," answered Rose, "she says the dance is quaint, coming from Galway, you see. Besides," slapping the plates together, "her fellow is a student at Cork, he hasn't arrived yet."

Kathleen sat on Norla's bed. A string bridle with a twig for a bit hung on the bed-post; rage and desire all smoothed from her face were swept into her profound sleep.

"MRS BLAUGHAN, Tuesday, the little horse, Tuesday for sure. How will that be?"

Christy Glass, smarter than they had ever seen him, with watered hair and a brocade tie, parted the dancing crowd with his shoulder and was gone before Kathleen could reply. He climbed on to the platform in the school hall, took his accordion from a chair, gave a great stamp and tore into "Waters of Meelagh." The dance quickened and took shape: eight stepping bars, a round, and eight back again, faster and faster as Christy settled to it. An old man, one of the silent crouchers from Plunkett's, left his seat on the stage and began a rattling accompaniment on spoons. While he played, he stared fiercely at Christy, whose own glance was closely following a plump girl in green.

Brian and Kathleen sitting by the door with their coats on, wondered whether to join in. They had come late from the pub, and had been disconcerted to find mostly boys and girls who must lately have been pupils in this very hall, nervously lined up on opposite sides under a dusty bulb. But now when Brian stood up, the tune ended. The dances after that were all whirling and thumping, just excuses, it seemed to the Blaughans, for the young people to put by their extraordinary primness. The Herberts looked in for a while, and smiled and went away. Kathleen watched Micky Plunkett do a silly jig in the corner, out of time with the dance, until Rose Corcoran took his hand and drew him giggling back again.

Just after midnight, the Learys arrived.

"Take off your coats, take off your coats, what's this, a wake?"

Grumbling, laughing, Brian and Kathleen allowed themselves to be shepherded into a set, and went twice through the crowd before Christy's last chord released them. Twice Kathleen met Micky and clasped his hand; twice they twirled, holding waists and leaning away.

In the middle of the next dance Kathleen stood still. Some undertone in this tune irresistibly hurt her heart. It had to do with the dreadful water in the sea-holes, and the

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upturned currach, and Mr McAulay, and even, somehow, Norla's horse. Stopping or weeping, that was the choice. She stopped and muttering "Sorry Michael, just a stitch," went over to Father Maguire's corner where he had been sitting alone all night. She thought he was watching the dance, his raincoat collar up to his ears, but when she spoke to him she saw that he was asleep. She and Michael Leary sat quietly beside him. Peace of a kind returned to Kathleen, though Brian, dancing by, looked at her with gathering strangeness. But anyway Father Maguire woke up, looked at the clock, and went over to tell Christy to play "The Soldier's Song." In a few minutes the hall was empty. Father Maguire turned out the lights, locked the door, and followed the dancers along the school track, in the dark, unseen.

"Tuesday, mind!" Kathleen heard Christy call, as she and Brian turned off towards the cottage, but she did not answer.

Brian sat on the bed taking off his shoes. "What's the matter with you, Kathleen," he began in a tone of concern, which however acquired annoyance as he continued, "why did you sit out as though you weren't well, when there's nothing wrong evidently? And why are you being so difficult all the time, isn't this a wonderful holiday for us all? Isn't this a lovely place?"

The noise from the generator stopped, and the light dimmed and went out. They found their way to bed in the dark, and went to sleep quite kindly after all. Brian woke later and asked Kathleen how she was, but all he heard was a little snore.

A SHINING RUNNEL stretched far across the sickle bay to the sea. Connor was collecting stones in his pail and unloading them where Norla was building a dam. She was very particular about their size and shape, and he couldn't understand why she kept throwing them away. He gathered them up again. Ruairi had gone to St Bride's in the boat with Sean, after only a slight and formal struggle with Brian. Kathleen got out postcards and searched for a pen. Brian lay on a rug on the damp sand, reading a Dublin newspaper three days old. Kathleen let fall her postcards of the island, sea brilliant, boats trim, cottages blinding white. She looked over the distant grey water, just beginning to return the morning sun. She dropped a pink stone into the runnel. There was nothing to do.

Cutting off one's ears for someone else is wrong

A man paid 110,000 guineas for Van Gogh's mother.
Not even for the woman that breathed, but a picture of her.
If he'd met her when she was what she was
I don't suppose he'd have given as much to her.

And if he had chanced to meet him would he have felt like supplying
The painter, even with enough sausage for the rest of his natural?
He probably wouldn't have wanted him in his house:
An ordinary functioning man, sleeping and glaring about him.

And although he has to pretend to value her,
Saying he'd give his eye teeth or at least his worldly wealth to save her,
I daresay he wouldn't really have wanted to give all that money
To have his own mother sitting permanently on his sofa.

A dog would rather have another dog
Than a flat board;

And is just a dog.

Jenny Joseph

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Karel van het Reve

Unnofficial Russia

The Dissenters & the West

FOR MANY LONG YEARS I almost considered myself to be the only Western scholar who was interested in and believed in the existence of an unofficial Russia. I read official Soviet books, I met official Russians, I listened to lectures given by official Russian scholars, writers, politicians, historians—and all the time I kept believing that behind this official Russia there must exist an unofficial Russia. I even kept believing for many years that the official intonation of the Russian sentence, which I heard on Moscow Radio and on meetings with official Russians, could not be the *real* sentence intonation of the Russian language, a language which, I firmly believed, must exist somewhere. There must be water in this desert, I believed: *In the desert a fountain is springing* . . . .

Never for a moment did I believe that the Soviet system had created a new kind of creature, *der Sowjetmensch*, Soviet man, as he was sometimes called by Western scholars, a Soviet man who liked being bullied and silenced, who adored standing in line, marching in demonstrations, taking part in elections with only one candidate, and who did not mind withering away in concentration camps. Nor did I believe that it followed from the existence of the régime that people with any brains at all should believe that one of the most important discoveries in the history of mankind is the discovery that quantity changes into quality, that consciousness is determined by social conditions, and that an important characteristic of matter is its materiality.

There must be people in Russia, I kept believing, who react to the régime and to the statements of the régime exactly in the way I react to them. Whatever Klaus Mehnert and Alexander Werth and all those other experts write, I thought, surely normal human beings must live in that country.

What I especially disliked in the West was the habit of our Sovietologists of taking the declarations of the régime seriously, their belief that one could understand the Soviet Union by trying to understand what the régime was saying. Some analysts go even further and maintain that you can understand the Soviet Union only if you look at it from a Marxist point of view. If that were true, only a National-Socialist would be qualified to study Hitler's Germany, and one would have to be consumptive to be able to make a genuine study of tuberculosis. It is interesting to note that this habit lasts only as long as such a régime remains in power. Nowadays many scholars study the Germany of Hitler, but few of them think that a prior qualification is the mastery of the doctrine of National-Socialism. Nevertheless, when Hitler was in power serious scholars studied Nazi ideology just as assiduously as they studied Soviet ideology—until recently. Before Pasternak, Daniel, Sinyavsky, Solzhenitsyn, Amalrik, Brodsky, Chukovskaya, and Nadezhda Mandelstam were known in the West, students of Russian literature actually *read* the verbatim reports of the Congresses of the Union of Soviet Writers. They seriously believed that by studying them one could learn what was going on in the Russian literary world. In Western books about modern Russian culture, Mandelstam received as many lines as Sholokhov got pages. Why? Because scholars like Struve and Lettenbauer thought that since nothing was said by official Russia about Mandelstam and millions of pages were filled with words by and about Sholokhov, Sholokhov must surely be an important writer.

Those were the times when the belief in the existence of *der Sowjetmensch* was extremely strong, and accordingly, the belief in the existence of an unofficial Russia was extremely small. When Andrey Sinyavsky's essay on socialist realism was first published a well-known Sovietologist (the late Alexander Werth) was absolutely

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convinced that this essay could not possibly be the work of a Soviet citizen.

WHAT DO I MEAN by "unofficial Russia"? Let me first explain what I do *not* mean. I do not mean those utterances by Soviet citizens that are different from the official Soviet statements but are nevertheless inspired by the régime. The people who produce these statements constitute perhaps the semi-official Russia. It is this vocal group that Western journalists, writers, scholars, diplomats and tourists meet most often. The more rigid a régime is (and the more idiotic its official statements are) the more deeply impressed a foreigner is when he meets a citizen who does not behave according to the official standards—a man who can possibly be bribed, who is interested in old issues of *Playboy*, who knows how to tell amusing anecdotes about Brezhnev. It is a familiar bunch: the Soviet journalist who mingles with Western journalists in Moscow or Washington, the Soviet composer one is apt to encounter at an Embassy dinner. He wears dark glasses, speaks French, and calls the Austrian Ambassador by his first name—the Yevtushenko-type of Russian traveller abroad.

These unofficial representatives of the régime go about their job in a discernible style. They expediently drop a number of official theses. They will not, in personal contact with a foreigner, start a serious talk about the great wisdom of the Leninist party, although this wisdom is officially considered to be an essential factor in the history of the USSR and indeed in world history. Not only will they shrewdly scrap a whole chunk of official dogma, they will also silently accept a number of critical views about the régime. And then they will disclose one or two sentiments that are favourable to the régime and unfavourable to its opponents. Such a semi-official Russian will say, for instance, that Alexander Solzhenitsyn is, of course, a great writer, and that the government should have permitted the publication of *Cancer Ward*, but he, alas, suffers from a number of vices such as megalomania and even anti-Semitism. It was, of course, morally wrong to invade Czechoslovakia, but weren't the military forces of Western Germany (Franz-Josef Strauss!) on the verge of invading Czechoslovakia? Andrey Sakharov, of course, has every right to express his opinion, but, *entre nous*, isn't what he says terribly naïve? It is wrong, of course, for the régime to persecute *samizdat*, but—let's face it—most of it is just graphomania and of precious little literary importance. The way the Jews are treated is regrettable, but Western protests against that treatment will only make "the situation worse" (Western translation: "will be counter-productive") and besides, the Jews are the only people in the Soviet Union who can and do emigrate. The dissidents should shun all contact with Western press, radio, and television, or Senator Henry Jackson because those contacts "compromise" them irredeemably in the eyes of the Soviet public. Western scholars and journalists should not take seriously an hysterical old man like General Grigorenko, or "shady characters" like Andrey Amalrik ("probably a KGB agent").

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not consider the persons who make these remarks to be ardent, convinced followers of the régime. Most of them dislike it. I do not think that Yevgeni Yevtushenko or Konstantin Simonov, or even Alexei Surkov, are altogether enthusiastic about censorship in their own country. In their way these men detest the régime. They defend the régime the way Nikolai Grech defended the régime of Nicholas I against the indictment of the Marquis de Custine: not because they like it, but for quite other reasons.

EVERYBODY AGREES that much has changed in the Soviet Union since Stalin died. On the other hand, many things have *not* changed. Present-day Russia—in its newspapers, ideology, and institutions—differs amazingly little from the Russia of 1935 or 1955. Is there any industrially developed country in the world that has changed so little in the last forty years? The festivities, slogans, congresses, leading articles, prize-winning novels, public heroes, official speeches resemble those of 1935 or 1955 like peas in a pod. I would be inclined to say, exaggerating only a little, that the Soviet Union of today is the same as the Soviet Union of twenty, thirty, forty years ago—minus the terror and the hysteria. And there is one other difference.

While the official Russia of today resembles nothing so much as the official Russia of the 1930s and '50s, the unofficial Russia has changed considerably. Whereas in the 1950s (or '40s or '30s) everybody seems to have been a true believer in Stalin, in Marxism-Leninism, in Socialism, nowadays believers in the official doctrine are exceedingly hard to find. There may well be a sociological law to the effect that a

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dictatorship which is revolutionary, terroristic, and anthropophagic stands a better chance of finding enthusiasts than a dictatorship which is merely a conservative police state. A régime that kills millions in order to attain some state of millennial bliss, a *tausendjähriges Reich*, gains more sympathy, at home and abroad, than a régime that persecutes only persons that really oppose it, and only then to preserve a *status quo*. More Western intellectuals were (or are) enthusiastic about Hitler or Stalin or Mao than about Brezhnev or, say, the Greek colonels. It suggests an interesting question (and I do not know the answer): How long can a revolutionary, terroristic régime go on existing after it loses its revolutionary fervour and its terroristic hysteria? Perhaps for hundreds of years.

BUT MY POINT IS the difference between the unofficial Russia of 1935–55 and the unofficial Russia of today. In the '30s, '40s, '50s there were very many true believers. Even the *apparat* of the régime itself included not a few enthusiasts and loyal defenders. Nowadays not only the *apparat*, but also the country itself has undergone a profound crisis of belief, a deep loss of faith. A portion of these non-believers belong now to the opposition, or the resistance, or the "dissenters" as we call them in the West.

One thing must remain clear. Every single member of the Soviet intelligentsia is in the pay of the régime, and, accordingly, is employed by the *apparat* through which the régime maintains itself. Some *intelligenty* are quasi-members of the *apparat*: diplomats, party organisers, party orators, journalists, and the like. Others—like teachers, economists, translators, scholars—serve the régime to a more limited extent. Among all those people the number of those who admire and support the régime is relatively small—smaller, I would dare to suggest, than the number of people in the USA who admire and support Richard Nixon.

But we should not forget that an American who hates Nixon is a species of political animal quite different from a Russian who hates Brezhnev. What an American hating Nixon really feels—compared to what many Soviet citizens feel towards their leaders—is a certain dislike, perhaps an obsessive irritation. One simply cannot compare the two phenomena. Can one even compare the feelings of many Soviet citizens with what many of my Dutch countrymen felt towards the Nazis in 1940–45? How many people were killed by the Germans in Holland in those years? 300,000? 500,000? An Estonian, a Latvian, a Lithuanian, a Russian laughs at these figures.

Is hatred the right word? No, hatred is too active a word; it has combative connotations of revenge and punishment. But there is something that remains after all the vindictive feelings of rage have died down. It is a feeling, as I sense it, much blacker and deeper than hatred.

DURING THE LAST five or ten years Western "Sovietology" has developed a certain interest in this unofficial Russia. More Mandelstam is read and discussed, and less Sholokhov. People are beginning to realise that if you want to know what is going on in the Soviet Union the underground journal *Politicheski dnevnik*, printed in the West in 1972, gives more information than *Kommunist* or *Bloknot agitatora*.

Of course, the authors of dissident literature do not *represent* unofficial Russia. Many people in Russia, as elsewhere, remain utterly indifferent towards all political issues. The official statements and announcements of the régime do not appear to touch them; other messages simply do not reach them. Very few are spontaneously interested in *le bien publique*. One should not forget that most people (there, as elsewhere) are only concerned about public affairs because radio, television, and newspapers continuously tell them that they are, or should be, concerned.

If we take the words "unofficial Russia" to mean those Soviet citizens who do take some interest in public affairs, then this unofficial Russia can, like Gaul, be divided into three parts:

1. The opposition, the dissenters, the few thousand people who actually oppose the régime.

2. Their sympathisers, their constituents, their reserves: the thousands who read *samizdat* and sympathise with the opposition, the reservoir from which the opposition replenishes its ranks;

3. Those people who are not in favour of the régime, but are not in favour of the opposition either.

This last group is an interesting group—and I have met many of its representatives. In a democracy this group is relatively small. If you are against the Government, you usually have some sympathy for the Opposition. The fact itself that you are "against the Government" makes you in a sense a member of this Opposition. In a dicta-

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torship this is quite different. The best way to explain this difference is perhaps to compare the situation in Russia with that in Holland during the Occupation.

I SPENT FIVE YEARS in Amsterdam under the German occupation, and I spent one year in Moscow under Brezhnev. I was impressed by certain similarities, even if there were, of course, great differences. As a Dutchman, you were not supposed to be in favour of the Nazi régime. As a Soviet citizen, you are officially supposed to be in favour of the régime. But what struck me especially was the attitude of the people towards the régime and towards the resistance movement; and here I found some illuminating parallels.

During the Occupation the Germans did some horrific things in my country. Very few Dutchmen approved of those things, not more than possibly some 8% of the population. The rest of the population of Holland was "anti-German" or, as it was then called, "good." These "good" people were in a rather difficult position. They could either try and fight the Nazis one way or another, thereby risking their lives, or confess that they were frightened of so doing. Now the strange and interesting thing is that very few people will admit to being afraid when moral issues are at stake. It is easy to concede that one would be afraid to make the trip to the moon, or to go to the dentist, or to cross the Atlantic in an open boat, or to take an evening walk in Central Park. But it was very difficult to confess that one was afraid to render assistance to the Dutch Jews who were all—adults and children, healthy and sick, male and female—being killed at the rate of a thousand a week.

There is, however, an escape hatch. The way out consisted in saying (and thinking) that by resisting the Germans one was not *really* helping those Jews, that one was only making things *worse*, that one was only provoking German reprisals. Weren't many of those so-called resistance people more or less mad or irresponsible? Didn't everybody know somebody who was using the Resistance only as an excuse not to sleep at home? These are what I call the *Murarka-Brien* arguments, a dialectical ploy named after the present correspondent of *The Observer* in Moscow and the traveller for the *Sunday Times* in Russia. They summarised and advocated the Russian variant of these arguments very aptly in recent articles in *The Statesman* and *The Times*. If what the Resistance does is "counter-productive", then it is no longer disgraceful to keep aloof from and even shun what the resistance is doing. The "Murarka-Brien[1] arguments" are not even difficult to defend. Most of what any Resistance movement does has only symbolic or, if you will, metaphysical meaning. For every Dutch Jew saved, I suspect that some ten Dutch resistance people were executed; from the hard-nosed practical view of statistics, their fight made no sense at all.

On the one hand, the Resistance people are admired because they express what everybody feels. On the other hand, they are resented because they do what everybody should do but is afraid to do. The more a dissident remains within the bounds of general loyalty, the more he is admired. Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward* seems to be so much more satisfying as a novel written for *Novy Mir* and then not accepted, than as a book published abroad and accompanied by harsh pronouncements by its author about the lamentable state of Soviet cultural affairs. When Andrey Sakharov's first Memorandum was published without his knowledge or consent, it was easy for the average Soviet economist or scientist or historian or journalist to praise him. Sakharov said what they all were thinking, what they almost put into their own memoranda, or tried to speak about, or were asked not to speak about. But as soon as Sakharov began to *fight*, as soon as he began to oppose the régime actively, these same intellectuals had to choose between joining him or finding reasons why they should not join him. And that meant finding reasons why Sakharov was wrong in doing what he did and saying what he said.

HOW DOES this unofficial Russia look at the West? In general one can say: with considerable sympathy. Four items of Western life are very popular in the Soviet Union: that a citizen of a Western capitalist country can freely travel abroad; that such a citizen can, if he has the money, buy anything he wants anywhere and almost at any time (whereas in the Soviet Union there is hardly any place where one can buy something, and hardly anything one wants can be bought). Then there is the fact that in many

[1] For Alan Brien it seemed important to warn, in the *Sunday Times*, against "the false friends" (in the West) of Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov. One would have thought it more urgent to warn against "the true enemies" of these two Russian resistance fighters.

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countries in the capitalist West you can say and write what you want, and you can choose your own government by helping to vote one or the other political party in or out.

But it is precisely here that the difficulties begin. There is a difference in the appreciation of these things between the unofficial Russian and the liberal Westerner. (I speak here of the liberal Westerner because the unofficial Russian feels that if he ever receives any "help from the West", that help must come from the liberals, from the "effete snobs", and not from the Nixons and Agnews whose sleep is as little disturbed by the plight of the Soviet intellectual as the sleep of Brezhnev and Kosygin is by the plight of the American Negro or the Chilean communist.)

Now this liberal Western intellectual is apt to remark that people who have little money can travel very little; that poor people can buy less than rich people; that the West produces too much; that our production is aimed at profit, whereas it should be employed (as it is in the Soviet Union) for the benefit of mankind; that to say and write what you want is of little help if it does not change society the way you want it to be changed; and what use is choosing your own government when the government the people choose consists of crooks and tax-evaders?

To this the Russian would answer: "Your troubles I'd like to have. . . . Of course the poor can buy less than the rich, and I am poor. Still, I would like to be able to buy for my little money the same amount and the same quality of goods *your* poor can buy for *their* money. I would even settle for half. . . ." What use, the Soviet citizen would answer, is production for the benefit of mankind—if mankind does not benefit from it? If such goods as are produced never reach the average consumer? The Soviet citizen also knows what only a few Western intellectuals appear to remember: that when there is some freedom of the press certain misdemeanours cannot be perpetrated (or not for long) that can be when there is no such freedom. They also know that a democratically chosen government, to be sure, contains a fair percentage of nitwits and scoundrels, but that percentage is much higher in a dictatorship!

OR TAKE ANOTHER SUBJECT on which there is a communication gap between unofficial Russia and the liberal West: Western dictatorships.

Towards the present régime in Greece the average Western intellectual feels aversion and disgust. The Russian intellectual, reading and hearing about this disgust, is apt to ask himself: what are those people so steamed up about? To the Russian intellectual the régime in Greece (the last one or the new one) appears to be a régime of almost unbelievable liberality, comparable to the régime of Tsar Nicholas II. A Greek ex-cabinet minister attacked the Colonels in a legally printed Athens newspaper—in the Soviet Union even a minister *in office* is not supposed to ventilate *any* opinion of his own, let alone criticise anyone except when and if the régime instructs him to do so. And even then he cannot use one single word that the régime has not approved for usage. Thousands of Greeks are working in the Netherlands—how many thousands of Soviet citizens would love to work in the Netherlands! One can buy the *Herald Tribune* in Athens, and the Penguin copies of George Orwell—who can buy either in Moscow? When I want to needle an audience of my students I always answer the question about "the future of Russia" with the expression of my hope that in 10 or 20 or 30 years Russia will be as liberal a country—as Spain is now. This hope is, I am convinced, shared by perhaps millions of Soviet citizens, but in the West only a handful of people know what I am talking about.

Let me offer a few other examples. There are a number of official Soviet statements about Soviet society that are not believed either by the Soviet intelligentsia or by Western intellectuals. That the Soviet Union is the freest country in the world, that there is no censorship, that the Soviet people revere their leaders, that a Communist society will be established by 1980, that the peoples of the Soviet Union love each other with brotherly love, that there is no anti-Semitism in Russia, that Communism is Soviet power plus electrification, that history has rarely known a body of men of greater wisdom and goodwill than the leadership of the CPSU, etc. etc. On these points Western and Soviet intellectuals see eye to eye.

But there are other and more divisive theses. Many people in the West believe that the standard of living and the standard of learning in present-day Russia would be fundamentally lower than they are if Lenin had not seized power in October 1917. Many people in the West believe that Soviet foreign policy is to a considerable extent influenced by Soviet fear of German "revanchism", or

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that Russians are more interested in serious literature than Frenchmen or Germans, or that the son of a Russian cleaning-woman has more chance of a university education than the son of an English char. I would not be surprised if most readers of the above believed at least one of these statements to be true. This also causes a disorienting communication gap between West and East.

AND THEN THERE IS that hoary old tandem, "Left" and "Right." They may not always be ideologically clear to the average Westerner, but still we more or less know what we are talking about when we speak about, say, "leftist groups" in Austria or France. In Russia these words are used in rather a different way. A person who is against censorship, who wants more freedom of expression, more right to voice dissent, is in the Soviet Union called "a leftist." Those who favour dictatorial controls are called "the Right." The late Vsevolod Kochetov was considered a Right-wing communist, Roy Medvedev is a leftist. Dubček is taken to be a man of the Left, Mao a man of the extreme Right. It is, therefore, very difficult to explain to a Soviet intellectual that revolutionary students carrying portraits of Chairman Mao are in our part of the world considered to belong to the Left.

One final instance. In the West, Marxism is considered a body of thought of much interest and importance, not only because of its influence on history, but also for its own intellectual sake. Many people in the West hold that Marxism has made substantial contributions to philosophy, economics, history, sociology, and psychology. It would not, I think, be difficult to make an impressive list of well-known Marxists in the US, France, Japan, Poland, England, Germany and Yugoslavia. But could such a list be made of *Russian* Marxists? The truth of the matter, and it is strange to tell, is that in the Soviet Union very few people are even remotely interested in Marxism. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Hemingway remarks of one of the characters that "he was a Christian, something very rare in a Catholic country. . . ." If one of these days General Grigorenko were to die in his psychiatric ward, one could say about him that he was a communist—something very rare in the Soviet Union. Recently in my own country, Holland, one enlightened institution of progressive higher learning placed an announcement in the Dutch press asking for a lecturer in the field of "Building Economics." The announcement added that non-believers in Marxism need not apply. While in the Western intellectual world the star of Marxism has been (since, say, 1960) constantly rising, in the Soviet Union it has been conspicuously on the decline.

A few months ago a friend of mine visited a Russian intellectual family in Moscow. One member of this family was a 99-year-old grandfather. He was a retired professor, and had known Lenin. While the old man made himself presentable, his children and grandchildren confided to my friend: "In a few moments you will see grandfather. He is a nice man and he likes to talk. There is one thing you should know. He still happens to be a Marxist. Please do not contradict him too much. . . ." In 1900 or 1910, in 1930 or 1950, such a conversation would have been improbable in Moscow.

IT IS HARDLY a great exaggeration to say that more university professors in Paris and Tokyo are convinced Marxists than in all of Russia.

Two years ago a specialist in Soviet philosophy told me the following story. He arrived in the Soviet Union just after a new volume of the *Filosofskaya Entsiklopediya* had been published. His Russian colleagues asked him his opinion on the volume. He made a few critical remarks about the entry on KARL MARX. (Parenthetically I must explain that Soviet scholars have a special difficulty here, since Lenin wrote an article on Marx for a Russian bourgeois encyclopaedia; and with every new Soviet encyclopaedia the same painful problem arises: not to reprint the old Lenin article would mean conceding that the composition of a better article on Marx than Lenin had written is humanly possible. So this old article is reprinted *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*.) My friend made some comments about it and then, to his astonishment, it appeared that none of his colleagues had ever ventured to look at that article—they were simply not interested in the subject of Marx. Now if a philosophical dictionary were to appear in Sydney or even Staten Island, I am sure there would be many readers who would immediately look up the entry on KARL MARX. As a matter of fact I was recently asked to contribute something on MARXISM for a new Dutch encyclopaedia. The editors told me that they planned the entry on MARX and MARXISM to be the bulkiest article of the whole encyclopaedia.

On such matters, clearly, the minds of East

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and West (unofficially speaking) do not meet. A participant in the recent Salzburg conference on "cultural exchange" expressed regret that his Western students often returned from a stay in the Soviet Union with a rather strong dislike of the Soviet system. To our "unofficial Russians" this prim note of regret is completely incomprehensible.

THIS BRINGS ME to the effects which the new *détente* and the ambitious programme of cultural exchange have on unofficial Russia. Of course, many (if not all) unofficial Russians are in favour of contact, relaxation, etc., if only because it gives them a remote possibility of reading real books, of travelling abroad, or talking to foreigners. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that unofficial Russia has in recent years felt a certain apprehension, a certain fear. It fears that the Soviet régime will use the Western impulse towards *détente* to influence Western public opinion in favour of the régime—all the more so, because the Russian intellectual has the impression that his naive Western colleagues are rather easily fooled by official propaganda. A Soviet citizen who believes what he is told by the régime is called in Russian an *Inturist*; and there is a memorable description of this type of Westerner in Solzhenitsyn's *First Circle*, where a Mrs R (Eleanor Roosevelt) visits a Moscow prison and is greatly impressed by the humanity of the Soviet prison system.

When Winston Churchill announced to the British public that England was going to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union in order to fight together against the Nazis, he remarked that if to resist Hitler he had to make a pact with the devil, he would do so. . . . Now, to make a pact with the devil is not difficult. It has been done before. But the difficulty begins when one has an alliance with the devil and still resolves to acknowledge openly that he is indeed the devil—and not the Archangel Gabriel. When George Orwell wrote his *Animal Farm* during precisely such an alliance, he had great difficulties in finding a publisher for it, because British publishers were extremely reluctant to bring out a book about the Soviet Union that totally lacked any "Gabrielity"

THE INFLUENCE OF A DICTATORSHIP often exceeds the limits of its actual power. The Russian government never had any power of censorship over books published in Russia. Yet there was the historic Elizabethan case, with Giles Fletcher's book, *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591), being confiscated by Her Majesty's government. When the first Dutch underground newspapers were brought to England during the Second World War, Holland's government-in-exile in London was so timorous that they gave orders to their radio stations, broadcasting from London, not to mention the existence of these newspapers. When in the 1930s a group of German socialists held a conference in Holland, the mayor of the little town where the conference was held had the participants arrested and extradited to Germany where they were subsequently killed. And the German authorities had not even *asked* for their arrest! When Andrei Amalrik wanted to send his paper on the Norsemen and Kievan Russia to a well-known Scandinavian scholar (it was Professor Stender-Petersen) he brought it to the Danish Embassy in Moscow. The Danish Embassy thereupon gave it to the KGB.

A good example of the apprehension I mentioned earlier is the reaction of unofficial Russia to the signing by the Soviet Union of the new Geneva convention. When it became known that the USSR was going to sign this international copyright convention, the reactions in the West were, for the most part, quite favourable. The negative reactions came, at first, not from the West, but from Russia—and, in my own view, those unofficial Russians were right. By signing the Geneva convention a country takes upon itself the obligation to protect *foreign* authors (if their country has signed the convention) in the same way it protects its *own* authors. This means that the Soviet government can make use of the excellent copyright laws that exist in the West, and can use the fact that judges in the West are independent and that law in the West is taken seriously, to exercise Soviet censorship over all publications by Soviet citizens in the West. Not only can the régime try to stop the printing in the West of *samizdat* authors (copyright is, by its very nature, a right to *prohibit*), it can also halt the publication in the West of any work that has been printed in the Soviet Union but displeases the authorities on second thought. Do Western authors get anything substantial in return? They are going to be protected not by Western copyright laws, but by Soviet regulations —and these happen to be something not quite comparable. Judges in the Soviet Union make their decisions on instructions from the régime.

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It will be very easy for the régime to make it impossible for Western authors to withhold the publication of their work in the USSR—and as soon as you can not prohibit you are, for all practical purposes, quite helpless. As to payment of royalties the régime can take any decisions it wants to take—it could even issue a law or a *ukaze* saying that for translations no royalties at all need to be paid. The signing by the Soviet Union of this convention tends to rob the *samizdat* authors of the protection that until now the Berne convention gave them in the West; and the officially-published Soviet authors are going to encounter a second Soviet censorship after their work has been published in Russia.

THE REACTIONS OF UNOFFICIAL RUSSIA to the cultural-political attitudes of the West towards the Soviet régime range all the way from mild amusement to bitter despair. The best—if perhaps cruellest—way to illustrate them is by slightly adapting the last paragraph of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The unofficial pigs look through the window at the negotiations between their leaders (the official pigs) and their enemies (the farmers). Their leaders, the official pigs, look and behave so much like farmers that the poor creatures on the outside look from pig to man, from man to pig, and from pig to man again; and it is impossible for them to say which is which.

In our own days a similar difficulty has arisen. The poor creatures (that is to say, the unofficial Russians) look through the window at their enemy, the Soviet régime, and at their friend, the West. And sometimes the West behaves in such a way that it becomes difficult for unofficial Russia to say which is which.

A Common Interest

What is needed is a common interest,
What you might call a friendly rivalry.

My wife is patron of the cat,
I am patron of the dog.
The cat and the dog are not exactly friends,
In fact they lead a rather turbulent life.

My wife backs the cat and I support the dog.
She fattens the cat and keeps its claws in trim.
I teach the dog a trick or two.

She has equipped her client with sparklers
To brandish in its mouth.
I tell her, Peace Prizes have come from gunpowder.
We laugh. Then I teach my protégé to spit.

An atomic pellet placed in the cat's saucer?
We discuss it sensibly, and agree
We don't want any serious damage to the house.
After all, we live in it.

I think she is training the cat to drop things
From a height.
I shall fit the dog out with a helmet,
And file its teeth.

How the fur flies!

We live in perfect amity, my wife and I,
Our marriage is founded on a rock.

D. J. Enright

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Philip Larkin

Show Saturday

Grey day for the Show, but cars jam the narrow lanes.
Inside, on the field, judging has started: dogs
(Set their legs back, hold out their tails) and ponies (manes
Repeatedly smoothed, to calm heads); over there, sheep
(Cheviot and Blackface); by the hedge, squealing logs
(Chain Saw Competition). Each has its own keen crowd.
In the main arena, more judges meet by a jeep:
The jumping's on next. Announcements, splutteringly loud,

Clash with the quack of a man with pound notes round his hat
And a lit-up board. There's more than just animals:
Bead-stalls, balloon-men, a Bank; a beer-marquee that
Half-screens a canvas Gents; a tent selling tweed,
And another, jackets. Folk sit about on bales
Like great straw dice. For each scene is linked by spaces
Not given to anything much, where kids scrap, freed,
While their owners stare different ways with incurious faces.

The wrestling starts, late; a wide ring of people; then cars;
Then trees; then pale sky. Two young men in acrobats' tights
And embroidered trunks hug each other; rock over the grass,
Stiff-legged, in a two-man scrum. One falls: they shake hands.
Two more start, one grey-haired: he wins, though. They're not so much fights
As long convulsive strainings to sudden unbalance
And one on his back, unharmed, while the other stands
Smoothing his hair. But there are other talents—

The long high tent of growing and making, wired-off
Wood tables past which crowds shuffle, eyeing the scrubbed spaced
Extrusions of earth: blanch leeks like church candles, six pods of
Broad beans (one split open), dark shining-leafed cabbages—rows
Of single supreme versions, followed (on laced
Paper mats) by dairy and kitchen; four brown eggs, four white eggs,
Four plain scones, four dropped scones, pure excellences that enclose
A recession of skills. And, after them, lambing-sticks, rugs,

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Needlework, knitted caps, baskets, all worthy, all well done,
But less than the honeycombs. Outside, the jumping's over.
The young ones thunder their ponies in competition
Twice round the ring; then trick races, Musical Stalls,
Sliding off, riding bareback, the ponies dragged to and fro for
Bewildering requirements, not minding. But now, in the background,
Like shifting scenery, horse-boxes move; each crawls
Towards the stock entrance, tilting and swaying, bound

For far-off farms. The pound-note man decamps.
The car park has thinned. They're loading jumps on a truck.
Back now to private addresses, gates and lamps
In high stone one-street villages, empty at dusk,
And side roads of small towns (sports finals stuck
In front doors, allotments reaching down to the railway);
Back now to autumn, leaving the ended husk
Of summer that brought them here for Show Saturday—

The men with hunters, dog-breeding wool-defined women,
Children all saddle-swank, mug-faced middleaged wives
Glaring at jellies, husbands on leave from the garden
Watchful as weasels, car-tuning curt-haired sons—
Back now, all of them, to their local lives:
To names on vans, and business calendars
Hung up in kitchens; back to loud occasions
In the Corn Exchange, to market days in bars,

To winter coming, as the dismantled Show
Itself dies back into the area of work.
Let it stay hidden there like strength, below
Sale-bills and swindling; something people do,
Not noticing how time's rolling smithy-smoke
Shadows much greater gestures; something they share
That breaks ancestrally each year into
Regenerate union. Let it always be there.

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Roy Fuller

Watching TV

I brush my tickling cheeks and find them wet.
How silly to sit here alone and weep;
Moreover, at vicarious events.

And yet I recognise the attitude
As demonstrating the essential man—
Only required is, after switching off,

To dance before my wife like Jack Buchanan,
Breathing a song of seaside infancy;
Or warble Tosti in the lavatory:

Attention to the tears diverted thus.
What curious masks I've worn all through my life!
And yet how can I call them masks that hid

From time to time in private that fair face
Of reason, not to mention compromise?
There's been one mask and several characters.

I thought for forty years the bourgeoisie
When it took arms would have to be fought back.
And now with Lewis, Owen and Sassoon

(And hairy purchasers of stone-ground flour)
Perhaps what I believe is that it's wrong
In any circumstance to take a life.

Not that the bourgeoisie has changed its spots,
As proved once more by Chile's recent times,
Yet here's a foolish Cambridge English don

Imputing in ENCOUNTER magazine
Pardon or love of violence in the '30s
To the intelligentsia of the left.

As though it wasn't war they tried to scotch,
As though they gained by moving from their class,
As though the age allowed mild remedies.

No doubt our academic might conjoin
This view with sniffling in one's sixties at
Schoolmasters refereeing football games.

But since I'm part of what's to be replaced
I give away the secret of my rheum
And of my comic or ironic turns;

For surely in the new society
Such matters must survive—and grow. That's why
We bothered with those selfless chores of youth.

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Erich Heller

Man Ashamed

Reflections on Love, Sex & Death

"'LIKE A DOG!' he said: it was as if the shame of it must outlive him."

This is the last sentence of Kafka's *Trial*, concluding the description of Joseph K's execution. The English rendering of the sentence is not and cannot be the equivalent of the original. For in the English vocabulary the one word "shame" has to do duty for two German words: *Scham* and *Schande* (as it would have to do for the French *pudeur* and *honte*). Interestingly enough, this linguistic deficit of the English language would hardly embarrass a translator of *The Trial* if Kafka had written that *"die Schande"*—the shame of it, the ignominy of this manner of dying—would live on after Joseph K's execution. But Kafka chose to write *"Scham"*, a term much more startling in the context than would have been *"Schande"*, the disgrace which would have justified the translators' adding "of it": the shame of it.

In Kafka's German, the shame in *Scham* is left to itself and survives on its own as a grammatical absolute. This is as important as it is extraordinary. It would be easy enough for the shame that is in *Schande* to outlive the victim: as the disgrace he had brought on his and his family's name. This is not so with *Scham*. The shame that is in *Scham* must be *felt* by the person or it is not. Yet in that last sentence of *The Trial* the heartbeat of shame is so intense that it seems to acquire a life independent of him who feels it. The inner state assumes bodily form after the manner rapacity does in the fable's wolf or cunning in the fox, but without any allegorical metamorphosis.

IT IS A PITY that the difference is lost in English. For this liberation of shame from its imprisonment in inwardness, and thus in psychology, is as characteristic of Kafka's art and moral sensibility as is the same emancipation of guilt in *The Trial*. In his world both guilt and shame belong to the category of those phenomena, the *Urphänomene*, of which Goethe, in a playful and paradoxical mood, once said that they are effects without causes:

> People find it so difficult to discover the causes because these are so simple that they are hidden from sight.

Of course, this was meant as a joke at the expense of Immanuel Kant. For what is so simple and hidden is not at all a cause in any ordinary sense; and the phenomenon, if there has to be a "because", is what it is because it is engraved in the metaphysical matrix of human being. Guilt and shame are such phenomena. Man would not be man without them. This does not mean that the *contents* or *expressions* of those essential *forms* of experience are as fixed as the *mould* itself. Far from it. They vary historically as well as individually. There were, among the many surprises that the exploration of exotic territories used to hold for anthropologists, the tribal women who obviously felt that they were quite adequately clad in their dark skins, but showed all the signs of being ashamed after missionaries had persuaded them to put on loincloths; then they tried to cover them with their hands and even hide in bamboo thickets. Their shame had been aroused by those sexual pennants that drew, they believed, immodest attention to what was decently unemphasised before.

Of Sex & Shame

BUT WE NEED NOT TRAVEL in order to encounter such changes in the fortunes of shame. The passage of time, even of a few decades, is enough; and the changeability of the historical panorama of shame becomes particularly conspicuous when we read a description of his own landscape by one of the chief engineers of its transformation. In his study of Leonardo da Vinci, Sigmund Freud observes with obvious disapproval that the sexual organs have for so long been regarded as *pudenda*, objects of shame, that,

> if one makes a broad survey of the sexual life of our time . . . one is tempted to say that only with reluctance does the majority of those alive today obey the command to propagate their kind; they feel that their dignity as human beings suffers and is degraded in the process.

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Although the desire actually to propagate the kind may not have much increased since then, yet the words "our time" and "today" sound very odd to a contemporary of suburban wife-swoppers, group-sex purveyors, Masters-and-Johnson gymnasts, and an entertainment industry in which more and more exhibitionists cater to more and more voyeurs.

BUT DESPITE ALL the obvious changes in the *mores* of talk, conduct and feeling, the association of Sex and Shame has always been of such intimacy as perhaps only sex can engender. There is, and has been at all times, something stridently hysterical, hopeless, and desperate in the attempts to bring about their dissociation and to render sex shame-proof. Indeed, it is only because of the moral bravado and impure excitement in daring displays masked as pure matter-of-factness, and because of the unnatural vibrato in what pretends to be the voice of nature, that the ceaseless public preoccupation with sex has not yet become the bore to all that it already is to the few, indeed so boring a bore that it might be looked upon as a device against overpopulation. Before long the mere suggestion of sex might instantly put to sleep the potential propagators of the race. As it is, no such remedial effects are to be expected because at least a modicum of the shocks of shamelessness, even if they are administered with the monotonous regularity of a clockwork, is safeguarded by the imprint of shame on human sexuality—a mark that appears to be indelible although it may at times be reduced to extreme pallor.

In looking askance at the alliance between sex and shame, Freud seems to suspect that, far from being rooted in human nature itself, it results from some dark conspiracy. Perhaps a clan of cunningly clever priests have secured their power over mankind by casting the spell of guilt and shame on its strongest impulses and succeeded in "conditioning" human responses by an insistence continued, as Freud puts it, for a "long series of generations"? If so, the "long series" could hardly be longer; and if ever it did "originate", this must have happened in times immemorial. The question, therefore, is not when it began—an unanswerable question—but rather how it could be maintained through all those ages and societies, many of them ignorant of the customs of the others, unless the readiness to feel the inner rhyme of sex and shame was as deeply ingrained in the human psyche as the sexual instinct itself; and if there is nothing that deserves to be called human psyche—there being merely a random number of possibilities of feeling and thinking, indefinitely variable throughout time—then Freud and every form of psychology have never had a proper subject matter and employment.[1]

OF COURSE, FREUD intermittently knew this, as, for instance, when he wrote the *Three Essays on Sexuality*. True, when Freud speaks there of shame, he calls it, a little shamefacedly, a "mental force" that "like the claims of aesthetic and moral ideals" is meant "to impede the course of the sexual instinct." Once again he amazes by his steadfastness, not to say stubbornness, in viewing the world *sub specie sexus* (so that all ethical and artistic achievements, say the Nicomachean Ethics, or the Categorical Imperative, or the saintliness of St Francis, or the murals of the Sistine Chapel, or the music of Mozart, would appear to owe their existence to "dams" built to "restrict" the flow of sexuality). Yet he acknowledges that shame is *meant* to do this, determined as it is within the "organic" constitution of man and "fixed by heredity." Education, he holds in this context, may merely help to articulate feelings of shame more clearly; it cannot possibly create them.

Adam & Eve

CERTAINLY, ADAM AND EVE, for all we know, enjoyed very little positive education unless we regard the instruction Eve received from the subtle serpent as the beginning of pedagogy. It did, after all, lead to the first men knowing what they did not know before: shame.

Having accepted the evil creature's evil teaching and eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, "they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." In this greatest and briefest prologue to human existence Adam, after the fatal misdeed, hides from God "among the trees of the Garden", for "I was afraid", he says, "because I was naked." And with the Lord questioning him "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" there begins the history of the human race. Its beginning is shame. As even God is not omniscient enough to leave off asking questions, and as He receives no answer, we seem to behold, in beholding shame, the kind of

[1] What remains outside the scope of this discussion is the literature of the kind of obscene humour, the "pornography" so robust and unnervous that only the sheerest prudery can judge it pornographic, the comic-satirical audacity that is unashamed but not shameless. But such works are as rare as the vigour that does bring them forth—the power, for instance, of Aristophanes or Rabelais, or sometimes Goethe and Balzac. Equally outside stays the incomparably more problematical, manifestly postPuritan and post-Victorian "phallic realism" and superstitious shame-exorcism of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence.

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phenomenon of which Goethe says that it is "an effect without a cause", at least without a sufficient cause, and are ready to believe (again with Goethe) that if, after all, there is a cause, it is hidden from sight somewhere amongst the trees of the garden.

THIS SUPERB MYTHOLOGICAL HISTORY which, like no other history, has abundantly inspired the art and thought of centuries with its imaginative power, makes shame, together with guilt, the first concomitant of individuation. For as long as Adam and Eve were not ashamed of their nakedness, they were not individuals either (and this despite the poem speaking of them as man and wife, as Adam and Eve). But *were* they Adam and Eve, man and woman, before "Adam knew Eve his wife"? Is it not of the essence of man and woman that they desire "to know" each other? The language of individuation—and there is no other; only music may reach beyond it—oversteps the limits of precise sense when it speaks of states of being that transcend the sphere of individualised existences, of a life before this life or a life hereafter, of life in Eden or life in the Promised Land: of the limitless bliss of all-oneness.

"The wolf . . . shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Thus Isaiah, in his prophetic ecstasy. But what the ecstasy of poetry extols is the surpassing harmony of a world *without* ravenous wolves and anxious lambs, *without* predatory leopards and defenceless kids; and this is as much as to say: a world without wolves or lambs, without leopards or kids. For the wolf who would not feed on lambs is no wolf, the lamb that is no prey to wolves is no lamb. Such a world is a world before or beyond the *principium individuationis*, a world without individual beings. "And they were both naked . . . and were not ashamed." This must have been, *pace* Milton's poetic licence, before they were Adam and Eve. As soon as they were, they were ashamed. For the price of individuation is shame.

IT MAY BE SAID that Jehovah, despite His not minding the nakedness of His children before their lapse, was an exceptionally austere and puritanical deity. There is, by the way, a charming version of the opening scene in Paradise—it is by the notoriously unpuritanical Boccaccio, the first story in his book of cautionary tales about the fall of illustrious personages from the heights of life, *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*—where the initial bliss of Adam and Eve, "great and incomparable as it was", is yet enhanced by their having received from the angels delightfully purple clothes, which, adorned with gold and jewels, covered their bodies in never diminishing splendour. But far from being prudish, this characteristic Renaissance invention merely renders more poignant the shameful poverty of the postlapsarian fig-leaf apron.

Prudery or not, surely the ancient Greeks—makers and worshippers of the most exquisite nudes—were no puritans. Yet it was they who raised shame to the status of a goddess. Hesiod, their great didactic poet who lived in the eighth century B.C., deified her. Her name was *Aidós*.[2] Yet even long before her acquiring divine status, *aidós* was most highly esteemed as the source of dignity, decency, and good manners. Any offence committed against her called forth *Nemesis*, her avenger. Altogether, *aidós* was one of the soul's virtuous possessions which distinguish human beings from animals. She makes as frequent an appearance in Greek literature, above all in Homer, as she is central to the ethics of classical antiquity.

Small wonder that every context in which *aidós* appears has been examined by scholars in search of its many nuances. It is indeed fascinating and rewarding to watch the procession of meanings attendant upon the word. On the one hand, it denotes sexual shame (to the point of its giving the name, sometimes, to what in Latin is *pudenda*, the organs of sex; on the other, a disposition of the psyche, the faculty of being ashamed, the negation of which leads to extreme states of inhumanity: for instance to that terrible brutality for which Apollo (in the twenty-fourth book of the *Iliad*) upbraids Achilles: like a beast, like a lion, did he behave—that is "without *aidós*"—when he maltreated the dead Hector. Or else the absence of *aidós* accounts (in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*) for the monster Polyphemus's monstrosity that manifests itself most abominably in his incomprehension of Odysseus' plea to show *aidós*, reverence, respect for the gods, by obeying the laws of hospitality.

From Hesiod to Herodotus to Hebbel

REVERENCE, PIETY, RESPECT for the individual person, in short: humanity—in *aidós* it is all linked to shame, and not too surprisingly so if we think of the moral reach even in modern

[2] For this discussion of *aidós* I am indebted to C. E. v. Erffa's treatise, under the same title, in the supplement volume XXX, 2 of *Philologus* (Leipzig 1937); also to Richard Harder, *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1960), pp. 208 ff.; and above all to Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Professor Emeritus of Classical Greek in the University of Tübingen, who most kindly has drawn my attention to the literature on the subject.

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usage of its negative: shamelessness. Is there not in the word "shameless" the utmost of moral opprobrium an adjective can carry? How firmly the law of *aidós* was fixed in Greek minds, and what catastrophes ensued upon its violation, can be seen from a story told by Herodotus. The story is about Candaules, king of the Lydians, his beautiful queen, and his friend and confidant Gyges. Not content with the intimate delights of his marriage, Candaules boasts of them and even insists upon displaying his wife's naked charms to Gyges who is reluctant at first to become party to what he knows to be an outrage, but is finally persuaded to hide in the queen's bedchamber. She discovers the deceit and is beside herself with the fury of *aidós* having been shamelessly betrayed. Gyges, she demands, must kill either himself or her husband. In the following night Gyges murders the king and assumes his throne as well as his widow.

The story's offerings to the simple moraliser, or the manufacturer of lascivious farce, or the explorer of psychological sophistications, have proved almost as irresistible as those of the celebrated triangle of Amphitryon, Alcmene, and Zeus. Thus it is not surprising that later authors, each very different from the others, have put the motif to their own good or not so good uses: Cicero, Hans Sachs, La Fontaine, Gautier, Gide, and above all the German dramatist Friedrich Hebbel in his tragedy *Gyges and his Ring*. He amalgamated it with a tale, told by Plato in the second book of the *Republic*: an ancestor of Gyges, a shepherd who, searching a cave that an earthquake had torn open in a place where his flock used to graze, found a ring that turned out to possess the magical power of rendering its wearer invisible. Hebbel's Gyges, then, is an invisible voyeur, but not, alas, an inaudible one. When, amazed by the allurements revealed to him, he utters a loud sigh, the queen, of course, cannot help suspecting the presence of an intruder. From this moment onwards she insists upon the tragic solution. Gyges, who in Hebbel's version of the story falls desperately in love with her during those fatal moments, is enticed to murder Candaules, his friend, by her promise that she would marry him; but upon receiving the news of the king's death, she commits suicide.

HEBBEL'S DRAMA is a failure; not because of his introduction of the magic ring, and not only because the age in which he lived seemed to obstruct the writing, out of season, of heroic verse tragedies, but because he fitfully tried to make the story comply with his favourite and all but compulsively pursued Hegelian scheme: the clash of two epochs with their antagonistic moral sensibilities. But instead of historically revaluing the fable, as obviously was his intention, Hebbel merely succeeded in confusing and obscuring Herodotus's simple meaning, namely *Nemesis* revenging maltreated *Aidós*. From the beginning of Hebbel's play, where Candaules, despite the anxieties of his faithful servant, discards the traditional insignia of his regal office, to the end, or almost the end, where he realises that he is being punished for having disturbed the slumber of the world—*"Nur rühre nimmer an den Schlaf der Welt"*—hints abound of his being a premature innovator, a would-be avant-garde reformer tragically frustrated by the sleepily conservative resistance of his estate. In this perspective the magic ring would almost have the function of an advanced technical device making possible what was unfeasible before. The flaw, of course, is that fairy-tale furnishings do not easily fit the houses of progress, nor are triangular bedroom arrangements the appropriate harbingers of noble reforms. Moreover, those Hegelian notions are contradicted, in the very heart of the drama, by the poet himself. He cannot help sympathising with the queen's terrible if old-fashioned indignation. Of course, if this were not so, there could not be as much as the semblance of true tragedy. But what decides the matter is the fact that *her* feelings alone possess profundity. Dramatically, *aidós* wins over the playwright's Hegelian designs. And this cannot be otherwise, for shame cannot be done away with by the machinations of history if human nature is to have any definite attributes at all. Herodotus, calling the caprice of Candaules unhealthy, sick, took *aidós* to be such a quality.

SO DID HOMER. In our historical minds we are quite prepared to find that many Victorian novels may serve as lexica of genteel manners, or that even in a comedy by Shakespeare a young woman, beside herself with jealousy, should address another:

> *Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,*
> *No touch of bashefulness? . . .*

But we might not take it for granted that in a great and representative poetic work, created long before Christ, possibly three thousand years ago, modesty, maiden shame, and much more than a touch of bashfulness, would emerge as the signs of good conduct. Yet the book on Nausicaa, the sixth of Homer's *Odyssey*, is pervaded by the lyrical tenderness of these virtues. The following is a charming example.

Athene, the goddess "of the shining eyes", had appeared in a dream to Nausicaa, the royal princess of the Phaeacians. She announced the approach of her marriage and admonished her to prepare the wedding feast by having all the house-

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hold's clothes and linen washed in the mouth of a nearby river. With this, the goddess planned to help the shipwrecked and exhausted Odysseus who was asleep in an olive thicket on this river's bank. It is one of those roundabout stratagems adopted by the Homeric deities to direct the lives of their protégés, indeed to raise accident to the rank of destiny. Nausicaa was meant to discover Odysseus and take him to the palace of her father, King Alcinous. In obedience to Athene, she now begs him to let her have a wagon for the washing expedition; she gives, elaborating Homerically, many a reason for it, avoiding the real one. She was too ashamed to mention the promised wedding.

Everything then proceeds as planned by Athene. Odysseus is woken by the noise made by Nausicaa's party of girls and creeps out "from under the bushes, after breaking off with his great hand a leafy bough from the thicket to conceal his naked manhood." Even so, it is only under the constraint of necessity that he appears before the women in his nakedness. "Begrimed with salty mud", as he is, "he makes a gruesome sight and sends them scuttling in every direction." Only Nausicaa remains, "emboldened by Athene, who helped her not to tremble." Would she, Odysseus implores her, direct him to the town and give him some clothing, be it only the wrapper in which she brought the linen? Scolding them for their timidity, Nausicaa calls out to the girls to return and asks them to let the divinely ordained kindness towards distressed strangers prevail over fear and shyness. Yet when, at Nausicaa's instruction, they lead him down to the river to wash him, Odysseus bids them go back again and leave him to bathe by himself, for he is ashamed, he says, to be naked in their presence. Even the Greeks in the age of Homer regarded it as natural that the human body, in the presence of others, should be clothed. Even they did not look upon clothes as the cover of nudity, but rather on nudity as being without clothes.

PAUSANIAS, in the second century A.D., collected what he found of stories from the Greek past and, traveller that he was, described the Greek lands. In his *Description of Greece* he tells how the newly-wed Odysseus and Penelope departed from the kingdom of Sparta where her father, Icarius, wanted them to settle down. He even pursued them after they had left and once more tried to persuade them, but in vain. He put before his daughter the choice of either returning with him or following her husband, but she did not answer. She merely wrapped herself in her mantle and veiled her face. This was enough for Icarius to know that he had lost her to Odysseus; but instead of being angry, he erected in the place where he had caught up with them a statue in honour of the goddess *Aidós*. A little like Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*, Penelope was silenced by shame when she would have had to speak of her marriage and to hurt her father by the confession that more than him she loved Odysseus. Shame, respect, and consideration mingle in her veiling herself.

This gesture contains the whole meaning of *aidós* and, moreover, reveals the link that exists between this warrant of humaneness and the awe felt in the face of the holy. For the holy too demands that man should cover himself. Even in his most "positivistic" book, *Human, All-too-Human*, Nietzsche said that shame is everywhere where there is "mystery", and never mind the inverted commas which the mood of this work forced upon what, after all, *is* mysterious. There were times when he meditated upon the conjunction of shame and mystery without those marks punctuating embarrassment. Some years before, at the time of *The Birth of Tragedy*, he entered in his notebook the entirely Schopenhauerian observation that shame seems to occur where man feels that "he is nothing but a tool in the hands of a will infinitely greater than is his own within his separate individuality." Some years later, at the time of *Zarathustra*, shame for him has become the alpha and omega of the history of man and man himself "the animal with red cheeks"; he had acquired them because there were so many occasions for him to blush. Shame is now "the fiend that attached himself to man when he desired to be more than an animal"—fiend, that is, to the animal in him.

Nietzsche & Ideology

FOR THE GREEKS, THEN, *aidós* was the warrant of humaneness, and shame an aspect of *aidós* and Nietzsche is surely right in regarding shame as so essentially human that no humanity is thinkable without it. This, once again, does not mean that the *manners* of shame are always the same. Like all manners, they belong to the stuff of history. Not all women in all historical epochs would, like Nausicaa, be ashamed to speak to their fathers of their approaching weddings, or like Penelope of their great love for their husbands (or, as is the case with Shakespeare's Cordelia, for their fathers). Indeed the propensity for shame is so malleable that propaganda might one day succeed, as Nietzsche remarked, in evoking shocks of indecency at the mention of toothbrushes. But what *is* meant is the very capacity for experiencing shame, the design of shame inscribed in the human soul. If this is a *sine qua non* of humanity, it follows that the campaigns of shamelessness, although they may

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be waged in the name of liberating ideologies, consciously or unconsciously have as their end the crippling of humaneness.

IDEOLOGY. One of the most intriguing dilemmas known (or rather only half-known) to the human psyche, and much aggravated in modern history, is that between the notions which the mind conceives and the ideas which the soul has, as it were, of itself and by itself; between the beliefs uttered in the outer trafficking of opinions and those to which unteachably the psyche clings. It is the dilemma, in brief, between ideology and substance. Where these are at loggerheads, authenticity is brought into question, and surely the questioning of authenticity has been one of the intellectual obsessions of the age from Rousseau to the Existentialists.

It would be impossible to present the major literary and speculative enterprises of the 19th and 20th centuries without giving due weight to "the problem of authenticity." Merely to mention Constant's *Adolphe*, or Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, or most of Henry James's novels, or André Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, or Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull*, or Freud's "Id" believing hardly a word the "Ego" says, or Heidegger's beings without Being, or Sartre's *mauvaise foi*—is to feel all around the tentacles of the unauthentic octopus.

Perhaps it is Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov who is the most impressive character among the many who live, cheat, kill, struggle or repent in the expanses stretching between the persuasions of the intellect and the unpersuaded nature of the soul. But Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* contains the wittiest account of an episode enacted in that place. The scene is the bedroom of Mathilde de la Mole, the intelligent, cynical, sentimental, proud daughter of Julien Sorel's aristocratic employer. They fall in love with each other, if so simple a phrase is permissible where everything is complexity. Her love has chosen the interesting upstart partly from contempt for the mediocrity of her own "Restoration" class. One night he climbs up to her window as she had asked him to do, not so much because she desired his amorous visit as in order to test his ardour and courage. Now, as he is in her room, it is less from passion—"passion," she reflects, "is after all only a model that is imitated rather than realised"—than from a "sense of duty", a perversely programmatic duty, that she becomes his mistress: "The poor boy was very brave, and I should make him happy, or I lack character." Of course, Stendhal, the observer of the profundities and antics of sexual love, author of *De l'amour*, would know that there was "no spontaneity in her throughout the night", and instead of "that happiness of which she had read in novels", she found only "misery and shame."

She has done her duty by the "poor boy" as well as by her intellectual convictions: by the contempt, above all, in which she holds the conventions of her society. Is it in spite, or because, of this that now she feels nothing but misery and shame? Neuroses are made of such misunderstandings between the tenets of the mind and the endowments of the psyche, with the intelligence eventually looking in helpless bewilderment at its refutation by the soul. The final outcome may well be a hysterical intelligence and a soul not enlightened but darkened and diminished.

SHAME IS NOT TO BE CHEATED by ideological opinions disguised as superior judgments. On the other hand: had Mathilde de la Mole been less of an ideologue and more of a woman passionately desiring Julien Sorel, that night would not have left her just miserable and ashamed; she would have come to know that the only conqueror of shame is the passion of love, the pleasures of which even feed on the soul's shy opposition to the conquest. This is why the transports of love would be unknown in a world without shame. Eros would not have taken delight in a shameless Psyche. *"Dans le véritable amour c'est l'âme qui enveloppe le corps"*. In true love it is the soul that envelops the body.

It was probably the 17th-century French quietist Madame Guyon who wrote the sentence which Nietzsche called *"das züchtigste Wort"*, the chastest word he had ever heard. It is unlikely that he knew its perfect foil, Shakespeare's sonnet about the sexual act:

> *The expense of spirit in a waste of shame*
> *Is lust in action . . . .*

It is not chaste, although it is outraged chastity that so bitterly denounces the shame of lust. But then, it is not about love.[3]

MAX SCHELER's fragmentary essay on "Shame and Feelings of Shame," written as early as 1913 and only posthumously published, contains in all its unchecked meandering much that is illuminating; for instance, the observation that in shame "the 'spirit' and 'the flesh', the eternal and the temporal, essence and existence meet in a strange

[3] It was a student of mine who once, perhaps unwittingly, succeeded in turning the Freudian wheel full circle. I was a visiting teacher in an East Coast American university and, insufficiently aware yet of the epidemic of psychological indigestion that had befallen the region, I expressed incredulity when he told me that more than half my class was undergoing psychoanalytical treatment. "What is wrong with them?" I asked. His answer was: "They all suffer from repressed chastity."

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and dark manner." Even in 1913 "the spirit" and "the flesh" demanded quotation marks and received them. Indeed, those classical opposites have long since been discarded, together with "mind" and "body", "body" and "soul", although the philosophical resources of the age have proved insufficient for their satisfactory replacement. Be this as it may, the ancient meaning of those opposites can hardly be recaptured in times that have reversed St Mark's "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" by emboldening the flesh to be strong and ready at almost any time and leaving the enfeebled spirit to its own or its analyst's devices. But if there is still a chance of comprehending—directly and without the fuss of historical examination—what was meant by those great dualities, it is through the experience of shame. For in the first place (if not also the last), man is capable of being ashamed of almost anything that is nature about him, nature's nature, as it were, not human nature; of anything that shows him to be enslaved by laws and necessities impervious to his own will, be it only the law of gravitation that, conspiring against his upright dignity, brings him to fall on a slippery pavement. In such a moment he prefers not to have onlookers all around him.

GOETHE even hated to be reminded of man's closeness to animal nature by the histrionics of apes. His beloved Ottilie, in *Elective Affinities*, calls them nasty creatures, humiliating to watch, and wonders how anyone can overcome this revulsion to the extent of drawing or painting them. Goethe was far from being a puritan, yet in those sublime verse passages celebrating, at the conclusion of *Faust II*, the salvation and transfiguration of Faust's soul, the angels that carry him bodily to heaven gently complain that, purified though he is, there still attaches to him *"ein Erdenrest zu tragen peinlich"*, a remnant of earthiness "painful to bear"—painful in its lingering impurity. Moreover, the aversion to displaying that dependence on nature which man shares with animals may even include the need for nourishment. It is certainly hunger and digestion that Nietzsche had in mind when he said that "the belly is the reason why man does not find it easy to take himself for a god." Man's need for nourishment also shows very clearly that he has only two means of defence against the superior power that nature wields over him: concealment or ritualisation. There is no culture in which this necessity of nature is not humanised and dignified by custom and etiquette, from simple table-manners to the elaborate rituals of banqueting. Yet while the giving-in of the hungry is, if it is rewarded with food, entirely pleasurable, the defeat of the dying is terrible. The terror of death and the potential shame arising from this defeat were, in former seasons of the human spirit, mitigated and even altogether banished by the hope of redemption and resurrection, or else the celebrations of the tragic.

The Shame of Death

THIS IS NOT so in the present epoch which is quick in forgetfulness, obtuse to damnation, and so far as tragedy is concerned, has sold all entrance tickets to the past. The rhetoric of the tragic may still survive in a somewhat debauched and dishevelled state. But in the new psychological surroundings it cannot disguise the shame of death, not to mention its many near or distant relations: the unease that meets advancing age, the deceptions practised to conceal it, death's terrible postponement by means of medical techniques that prolong not so much living as dying, and the sad embarrassment of funerals.

Death, terrible to say, has joined the class of *pudenda*—just as if dramatically to make up for the losses inflicted elsewhere on shame by shamelessness. Not to have succeeded in abolishing death is vaguely suspected to be the collective failure of science and progress. Nonetheless there must always have been, where death was, also an element of shame, productive of the exorbitant ceremonial ritualisations that have surrounded it in all traditions. Indeed, this is what death has in common with marriage, the festivities of the wedding, of that sexual event which Nausicaa was too bashful to mention in speaking to her father. Death too, and much more so, does not invite outspokenness, as can be seen from the abundance of euphemisms its terror and shame have provoked, euphemisms often shameless themselves in their obvious motivation.

THE SHAME OF A DEATH that is not attended by ritual is even the theme of one of the great tragedies of classical antiquity: of Sophocles's *Antigone*. For she—and, for that matter, all the other personages involved—are destroyed by the insult Antigone's pieties suffer when the king decrees that her two brothers, his enemies who were killed in battle, should be denied burial and inhumanly be seen to suffer what all animal nature suffers in death: the body's decomposition, helped by devouring beasts.

For all to see. Like language, love, or civilisation itself, shame would be unthinkable if man had been designed to live entirely by himself, although even in this hypothetical condition he may choose God as his "Other." Nonetheless it would be wrong to assume that shame is entirely a "social phenomenon." For in the last analysis,

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man is, when he is ashamed, ashamed of himself and his own nature, even if it is in the sight or knowledge of others that he is shocked into the most poignant awareness of his shameful condition. When Sartre still had time for philosophical reflection he knew this: shame, he wrote in *L'Etre et le Néant*, makes a man recognise that he *is* as the other sees him. And certainly, what does gaze at him through the eyes of another person, even if the other person is a stranger, is he himself.

The Ugliest Man

IN THE FOURTH BOOK of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* there occurs one of the strangest meetings the prophet has had in the course of his strange perambulations. It is in the valley of death that he comes upon "the ugliest man", a pitiably disfigured creature, and as he sees him, Zarathustra is overcome by "a profound sense of shame" and, "blushing right up to his white hair", he averts his eyes and makes haste to leave the terrible sight behind.

But it is his blushing by which "the ugliest man knows him: That is how I recognised you as Zarathustra", he explains. As he recognises him, he shouts after him with a voice that sounds like the gurgling and rattling of "water . . . in clogged waterpipes." "Zarathustra, Zarathustra," he cries, "guess my riddle . . . the riddle that I am . . . who am I? and what do I mean by *'the revenge taken on the witness'* "?

Zarathustra stops and solves the riddle: *"You are the murderer of God"*, he says, and now "let me go. You could not *bear* him who saw *you*—who always saw you through and through, you ugliest man! You took revenge on this witness!"

Yes, says the ugliest man,

> he *had* to die: . . . he saw man's . . . concealed disgrace and ugliness. His pity knew no shame: he crawled into my dirtiest nooks. . . . He always saw *me*: on such a witness I wanted to have revenge or not live myself. The god who saw everything . . . this god had to die. Man cannot bear it that such a witness should live.

This is Nietzsche-Zarathustra's last and most disguised proclamation of the *Übermensch*. God, the witness, is being killed by "the ugliest man" so that there should no longer be need for shame. Is, then, the ugliest man really no longer ashamed? Not even in the face of Zarathustra who blushes for him? If such questions are to be rendered illegitimate questions, man himself would have to be left behind, for "the ugliest man" is here nothing but a superlatively ungainly name for man as such. The utopian *Übermensch*, the most beautiful human or superlative being, would have to take his place. Only he would know of nothing to be ashamed of and thus, paradoxically, would not mind being seen by God. Yet if the *Übermensch* is an unattainable goal, then the ugliest man has made a mistake. Not God but shame he would have had to kill in order to forget what it is like to feel ashamed. Shame is not "another": it is he himself who sees himself through the eyes of God—and despises himself. Zarathustra, as he walks on, knows this: "None have I found yet", he muses, "who despises himself so deeply: that too is a kind of height." It is, despite the Wagnerian *mise-en-scène*, a profound story.

Had the ugliest man succeeded in doing what he really desired to do and destroyed shame, he would have abolished man. For man, to reverse the last sentence of *The Trial*, would not outlive his ability to be ashamed.

Calendars

Miss Brown's had flowers, generous bouquets
Too lush to be true. Magee's favoured cats
On thick, warm rugs near glowing firebars,
Cats better off than we were. Others bore,
Like bloated postcards, all the brittle gloss
Of beauty spots killed by the camera.

Reihill's was the calendar I liked best.
Each year, above the perforated days
In sturdy profile, centred in the spell
Of fence and paddock, all the proof we craved
That one outsider made it by a head,
Or that last year not all the favourites fell.

Frank Ormsby

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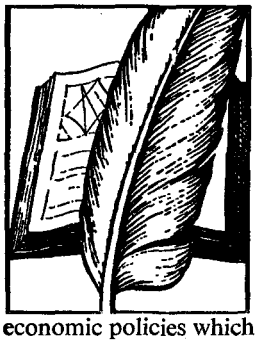

Column

IN A REMARKABLE article in *The Times*, its financial editor, Mr Peter Jay, has recently written that soon we shall be looking back with regret and nostalgia to the blissful era of those "stop-go" economic policies which have been for so long an object of scorn to all enlightened and progressive economists; and still are to Mr Heath and Mr Barber, who with a courage and determination which have begun to look like recklessness have pinned their faith to a policy of continuous economic growth whatever the costs of such a policy may be.

Nor would Mr Wilson disagree that continuous growth must be the primary aim of any self-respecting government. How else can we hope to go on getting richer and richer? Having been once trapped himself in the mincing machine of "stop-go", he is determined not to be caught in it again. Only he would achieve continuous growth without the evils which have accompanied it as a result of Mr Heath's clumsy and incompetent mismanagement. For Mr Heath, the pursuit of continuous growth has involved rising prices, a high rate of inflation, and a huge balance-of-payments deficit. Mr Wilson would also achieve continuous economic growth, but without rising prices, a high rate of inflation, and a huge balance-of-payments deficit. It is as simple as that.

What, then, does Mr Jay mean by saying that soon we shall all be regretting the blessings of that "stop-go" process which everyone agrees must never be allowed to occur again? The essence of "stop-go" was that, while every government declared its faith in the necessity of economic growth and devised policies to create it, each in turn found that at some point the costs of such policies proved to be more than it could face or the country bear, and promptly proceeded to put its policies into reverse, so that growth succeeded stagnation, with all its attendant evils.

Such a state of affairs was, of course, offensive to all right-minded persons, especially when they compared Britain's poor economic performance with that of the European Economic Community of the Six, or the United States or, most of all, of Japan. Mr Jay's point, however, was that, whatever the disadvantages of "stop-go", they were at least tolerable and could be contained within the framework of our existing institutions. Moreover, for every "crisis" which attended the end of the "go" phase of the cycle, there were alternative policies available which, however disagreeable, permitted the hope that at some later and not too distant future, swings would once again become roundabouts and "stop" once again give place to "go."

INDEED, THE REGULAR ALTERNATION of swings and roundabouts might be looked upon as a process to which the British two-party system was particularly well adapted. Each party, flexing its muscles, as for the starter's gun, entered upon its term of office to the sound of *Go!* and having run its appointed course accepted the inevitable *Stop!*, but at the same time, as if the thing had become a kind of relay race, handed on the baton to the next government. Amurath to Amurath succeeds.

Unfortunately, events do not conform to so neat a pattern. Mr Jay points out that, over the last two decades the Stop-Go cycle has been continuously contracting, so that its entire course can be completed within the term of office of a single government—which must therefore prove itself equally adept at standing still, or running backwards, as at making rapid progress forwards. Such demands are apt to breed confusion in ministerial, and especially prime-ministerial heads; and we have had some notable examples of this in recent years. Sometimes, it has been necessary to cut the heads off altogether, to prevent worse confusion. It has been a ground for criticism of several prime ministers that, like unsuccessful heavyweight championship contenders, they lack the killer instinct which is necessary when ministers prove insufficiently responsive to the contradictory requirements of Stop-Go.

Moreover, Mr Jay suggests, not only does the Stop-Go cycle continuously contract, so that it takes shorter and shorter periods to run its course, but there tends to be a greater and greater difference of altitude between the peaks to which it climbs at its highest point, and the depths to which it descends at its lowest. A government caught in the cycle must not only be able to run both forwards and backwards at ever-increasing speeds. It must also learn to climb higher and fall lower with every repetition of the cycle. So much so that, if past trends continue (and there is no real reason to believe that they will not), in the not-very-distant future the cycle at its lowest point would produce effects—in particular, an unacceptable rate of inflation at the same time as an unacceptable rate of unemployment—which would shatter the existing framework of our constitutional arrangements. Mr Jay, unlike some commentators, or even Mr Heath

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himself in some of his moods, does not suggest that this point has already been reached, or that it is immediately on the horizon. He calculates that, given the increasing acceleration with which the *ewige Wiederkehr* of Stop-and-Go accomplishes itself, together with the increasingly precipitous nature of its ups-and-downs, two more repetitions of the cycle, two more turns of the screw, as it were, are the most that we could tolerate without some fundamental upheaval in our political system. By this, if I understand him correctly, he means a period of not more than about five years. That this is the kind of period which he has in mind is perhaps confirmed by his tentative suggestion that, when the cycle has at length reached its lowest tolerable point, the moment will finally have come for Mr Enoch Powell to emerge as the man who will save us from ourselves. Mr Powell is ageing, and under modern conditions politicians age rapidly. One would guess that five years is just about the time that is left for him to present himself as a potential saviour of society, though of course in a constitutional guise.

I HAVE PRESENTED Mr Jay's argument in a highly simplified form, and without the ingenious statistical tables which he produces in support of it. As he himself admits, they are open to criticism, and he offers them more for their illustrative than their probative value. But I hope that in simplifying the argument I have not misrepresented it; more particularly because, disturbing as Mr Jay's thesis is, I happen to agree with it. And indeed, in this case, simplification may have some merit, because it may serve to emphasise how very alarming the implications of his argument are.

They are all the more alarming because, I think, a very large number of people, whether they have read Mr Jay's article or not, have on their own account come to believe that his conclusions are likely to be right. This is in a way surprising, because, rising prices, inflation, petrol and fuel shortages and industrial unrest notwithstanding, more people have probably better reason to be (and are) content with their lot than at any previous period in our history. Mr Heath, I think, could in all sincerity repeat Mr Harold Macmillan's fatal words: "You have never had it so good." Only if I understand Mr Jay rightly, these words should by now carry with them the implication, which no politician would dare to express, that very soon you will never have had it so bad.

By the time these lines are printed we shall, I assume, know a great deal more than we do now about the immediate crisis in which we are involved. At the moment many aspects of it are shrouded in the deepest mystery. Indeed, I notice that a great many distinguished economists and financial commentators have by now, as if suddenly struck by the mystery of things, begun to exercise a most unusual, and in a sense unbecoming, restraint in their predictions of the future. Some of them, of course, since that is their métier, still continue, though with singularly muted voices, to urge their audience to invest in the future. What else can they do? But their advice is qualified by so many reservations and conditions that in most cases it is by now about as intelligible as that of the Delphic oracle. Others have different methods of evading the menace of the future. One distinguished financial journalist washed his hands of the whole business by declaring that, since from now on everything depended on politics, as an economic and financial expert he had no more to say. It was, perhaps, as honest a response as any. Anyone who has followed the financial columns of the British press in recent weeks would conclude, I think, that this was a situation in which the acknowledged experts had at last been forced to confess that they did not know or understand what was happening.

FOR THIS REASON I greatly admire Mr Jay, who after all carries with him the authority of *The Times*, for so plainly and boldly laying upon the line, as it were, his own version of the future. And since I should like to pay him the compliment of taking him as seriously as he deserves, I have tried to think of what situations in the past in any way reproduce the conditions which he thinks will prevail in the immediate future.

It must be confessed that the task is not an easy one because the situation which Mr Jay envisages is one in which the British people will be required to bear at one and the same time the weight of two intolerable burdens—an intolerable burden of unemployment together with an intolerable burden of inflation. I imagine that such conditions might be found fairly commonly in backward or underdeveloped areas of the world. But even today it is difficult to envisage Britain as some kind of South American republic. A closer comparison might be found in Germany of 1923, when as a result of the French invasion of the Ruhr, a general strike was declared and, to support it, the Government printed money indiscriminately so that within a few months the value of the mark was totally destroyed. The result was a total transformation of the social and economic structure of German life, revolutionary outbreaks in Central Germany, and the intervention of the armed forces to suppress them. It could be said that the great inflation of 1923 put

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an end to the possibility of peaceful democratic development in Germany. There is little doubt that the result would be the same if events in this country were to reproduce the same conjuncture of uncontrolled inflation and large-scale unemployment.

It may be said that so extreme a situation, created by a unique combination of domestic and international events, is unlikely to repeat itself here. Mr Jay, however, reminds us that in this country similar results might follow under far less desperate conditions. One reason is that our level of tolerance, either of the results of inflation or of large-scale unemployment, is far lower today than it was in the Germany of 1923. No government, and no political system, could for a moment contemplate surviving today under the kind of conditions that prevailed there at that date. The second reason is the existence in this country today of a trade union movement which, for the first time perhaps, has become fully conscious of its industrial and political strength, and is not for one moment prepared to accept any reduction in working-class expectations of a rising standard of life.

On the whole, reflection on the past tends to strengthen rather than diminish one's belief in the correctness of Mr Jay's conclusion and does not give one much confidence in that phrase with which we in this country have comforted ourselves for so long: *It can't happen here.* It can, and, if Mr Jay is right, it will.

I SHOULD LIKE to congratulate both the *Times Literary Supplement* and Mr John Gross on his recent appointment as editor of that journal, as from April 1 of this year. I can think of no one better fitted, by knowledge, experience or temperament, to fill that position, and the high standard which he maintained as Literary Editor of the *New Statesman* is a good augury for what he may hope to achieve in the *T.L.S.*

For readers and writers generally his appointment and the way in which Mr Gross performs in it are, indeed, a matter of considerable importance, for the *T.L.S.* probably exercises a wider influence than any other literary journal in the English-speaking world. Its closest competitor, perhaps, the *New York Review of Books*, still retains too much of the tone of some dissenting tract or missionary pamphlet to rival it in this respect. In recent years, however, the ways in which it has exercised that influence in some important fields of criticism have given rise to justified doubts and suspicions. I am thinking in particular of Russian and Middle Eastern studies, in which its reviews have sometimes betrayed a degree of personal and political prejudice which it is hard to reconcile with the journal's reputation for impartiality and objectivity.

Of course, in such matters, one ought to take account of one's own prejudices. What in oneself may appear to be absolute neutrality may seem to others passionate partisanship. I would not wish to restrict *T.L.S.* reviewers, because of their anonymity, from expressing their personal views and opinions. But anonymity does involve certain obligations and responsibilities, on the part both of reviewers and of editors, which do not apply to the signed review, in which, as it were, the writer puts his cards on the table and lays his opinions and reputation on the line, so that everyone may judge with what authority he speaks, how far his view of any particular book is affected by his personal opinions, sometimes on subjects not germane to the matter in hand, and how much those opinions are worth.

I do not expect Mr Gross to abandon the principle of anonymity to which the *T.L.S.* has clung so tenaciously in the past; otherwise, I assume, he would not be editor. But I hope, and indeed believe, that he will recognise the obligations involved by anonymity somewhat more strictly than they sometimes have been recently; and therefore I take the opportunity of the New Year to wish him and the *T.L.S.* the greatest possible prosperity under his editorship.

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Andrey Sinyavsky

The Voice & the Chorus—By HENRY GIFFORD

IT IS EXTRAORDINARY how ever since that indomitable recusant the Archpriest Avvakum in the 17th century Russian writers who oppose the régime contrive to be heard. Fortune is no friend to Russia, but it cares remarkably for Russian literature. At this moment Osip Mandelstam—who in 1937 had written to a friend: "I am a shade. I don't exist. I have only the right to die"—is being revealed to the Western reader as one of the great poets of the time.

When Andrey Sinyavsky was sentenced in 1965 to seven years' imprisonment for "distributing anti-Soviet propaganda", he found one form of writing was still open to him. *A Voice from the Chorus*[1] is part of the correspondence Sinyavsky kept up with his wife at fortnightly intervals. As he told her near the beginning, it was because all these notes on his experience were directed to her that they gained their meaning. The Voice, then, is Sinyavsky's; or as he prefers to call it the voice of "Abram Tertz."

The Chorus changes. At first it was mainly one of old men serving interminable sentences for their religious convictions. Then, with a change of camps, it became "war criminals", and also crooks from the underworld. There were dissidents like Sinyavsky himself, and there were nationalists. The third and last of his camps was next to a "hospital zone" and to a large prisoners' cemetery. (He liked the plain coffins, which suited death better: "in the camp it is all more lapidary, simple, complete. Lastly, more serious.") The voices of so many living and of those nearing death—"one dying man a week from his death stole the glasses of another dying man"—fall incessantly upon Sinyavsky's ears. By the end he was sometimes weary of them: "it happens you go into the section, and your body feels bliss surging through it in waves—nobody there!" But mostly he listened to the Chorus, to its strange, original, tragic and absurd utterance, which often had the exactness of proverbial wisdom. The Chorus speaks now like an Old Believer from the pages of Leskov, now in thieves' slang, now in jargon derived from the newspapers and popular science imperfectly understood. It is present in its home-made ballads and lyrics, and in phrases taken from novels about themselves written by prisoners ("We picked flowers, etc." "I knew nothing then of life's brevity"). And it is there, too, in the remembered saying of a non-Russian prisoner, "I had not yet learned to weep in Russian", and in Chechen songs, and in urgent appeals to Sinyavsky the scholar: "Donatovich! What is dualism? . . . Donatovich! What is carnal appetite? . . ."

THE OPENING SENTENCE belongs to the Chorus: "I am going to speak straight, because life is short." Sinyavsky's own observations are much concerned with ways of speaking and writing, and with the nature of art. (He has been, and is now again, in Paris, a university teacher; he is a fine critic, and a story-writer.) Life did not seem to him short in those five-and-a-half years of confinement. He tells himself, "Don't hurry, let us listen to the epic flow of time." He came to appreciate "the slowed-down pace of existence here compared with the normal rhythm of life which, whether they like it or not, they follow outside so as to hurry to the bus, work, the cinema. That is why thought in camp seems to flow more naturally, without contrivance of the mind to get ahead of somebody. . . ."

But he recognised very early that prison would

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[1] The original Russian text has just been published in Britain as: *A Voice from the Chorus* by Andrey Sinyavsky. (Abram Tertz: *Golos iz khora.*) Stenvalley Press, £5. An English edition is to be published later this year in a translation by Kyril FitzLyon (Harvill, London; Farrar, Straus, New York).

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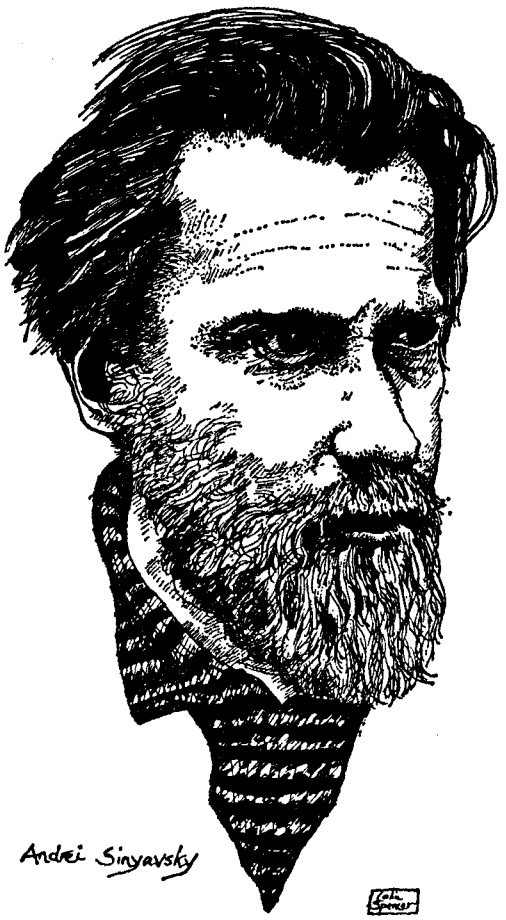
help him to speak straight, in so far as those inside it learn to think with a new directness. "Thoughts are not found in books, but grow out of your bones." The prisoner has so little to distract him, except his fellow-prisoners: "It is interesting to think on the minimum—when there is nothing, neither the necessary books, nor the strength, and nowhere to look things up. You are given a few lines, or a single picture, a single phrase in music—and there and then you go deep into it and clean forget yourself." He wondered why Avvakum in his Siberian pit had so many thoughts, and decided it was on account of the constriction.

> If in our sleep we can dream of a street along which people are walking, this means that within us it is spacious as in a town, and our soul is large, and one can walk through it and descend by a staircase to the sea, and sit on the beach and look. . . .



IN THE FIRST WEEKS after arrest Sinyavsky began to tap his resources. He "tried to restore from memory the sense of a few books, read as long ago as in childhood." Among them were *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*. To Swift's Lilliputians the most familiar things on Gulliver's person were strange — his watch, comb, handkerchief. "The discovery of Swift, fundamental for art, was that in the world there are no uninteresting objects, so long as there exists an artist who will fasten his gaze on everything with the incomprehension of a dullard"—the "making it strange", in fact, formulated by Shklovsky. The procedure of Defoe is the opposite to Swift's. For Crusoe the most ordinary things become marvellous because they are so difficult to bring about—

> planting a garden, sewing clothes, making a table. . . . When your life is staked on a grain of wheat as on a card, the sprouting of the miserable blade has the suspense of a detective story. . . .

Robinson Crusoe teaches survival where there can be no escape, and is thus the novel that does you most good.

Sinyavsky was able to survive the hardships and the degradations because he was a writer. He realised that "art is an attribute of the personality, the nation, the age, and of all mankind like the instinct of self-preservation. . . . Even death, its enemy, it converts into an ally." Something to this effect can be found in *Doctor Zhivago*, and not surprisingly, since he has written extremely well on Pasternak.[2] Sinyavsky's ideas about art are often close to those expressed by Pasternak in his novel (and elsewhere). Sinyavsky too believes that art "in the last resort really keeps on telling about its own inexplicable presence." Again, "a man falls into 'the situation of art' as at birth one falls into 'the situation of life.' Then everything for him becomes art. . . . "

On the very first page, Sinyavsky records the sudden conviction that for an artist it is all-important to discover his "living model."

> When by the will of chance or the force of fate he comes upon life that corresponds to his thoughts he is happy. He looks at this country and he says "mine"

—in the way that Pushkin did when discovering Bessarabia and its gipsies, and Lermontov Caucasian scenery. Prison life, for all its wretchedness and back-breaking labour, was the "living model" that Sinyavsky needed. It was more than the "objective correlative" for hitherto inexpressible thoughts; rather it gave him, as the Pisan cage did to Ezra Pound, a heightened sense of the mystery, when "the mind swings by a grass-

[2] "On Boris Pasternak", ENCOUNTER (April 1966), pp. 45–50. For a complete and very good translation of this essay see *Pasternak; Modern Judgements* (ed. Donald Davie and Angela Livingstone, Macmillan, 1969).

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blade" and "an ant's forefoot shall save you", and a new kind of attention sets in. He asks himself: "Is it smoke that runs over the wall or the shadow of smoke?" He has the sense that nature would like to help him but cannot. Gradually he finds that it can, and he accepts rain, heat, and frost as evidence of nature's concern: "you feel on your skin the supporting hand of nature." And in this new life the smallest things count. "My cares are simple, my joys unsophisticated: yesterday, for instance, I clipped my toe-nails."

LIKE POUND, ONLY GUILT-FREE, Sinyavsky holds on to the first truth about himself: *ego scriptor*. "For me a sheet of paper is like the forest to a fugitive." His companions seem to have recognised this: one of them gave him the refill of a biro on his birthday. He observes: "To write something that will stand the fullness of time you need to be altogether empty."

It is not hard to see that the years of prison did much for Sinyavsky: they brought him face to face with his own ideas, and with a world that intellectuals as a rule know little about; and, most important of all, they taught him to sit still. "Abram Tertz", before this experience, had been a lively and keen-witted writer, with marked affinities (as Andrew Field has pointed out) to predecessors like Andrey Bely and Sologub. His fantasy, his sense of the ludicrous, reminded at times of Bulgakov, or of Zoshchenko, or even Ilf and Petrov. In my own view he was more significant as a critic (on Pasternak and Akhmatova).

A Voice from the Chorus contains some very fine criticism in small compass. What he has to say about Akhmatova here, and the nature of her art, is beautifully put. Her poetry "resembles a pond or a lake, edged by a wood, or a mirror in which everything appears less real but more distinct than in actuality." He writes on Hamlet and Mandelstam twice in juxtaposition (Hamlet the first intellectual, and Mandelstam the last), and he observes how Mandelstam breathed history like his native air, and "deals with it as freely and unaffectedly as Pasternak with nature." Sinyavsky uses a remark dropped by Leskov, about the difficulty of portraying someone he can visualise too clearly, to show the limitations of "realism." He has a paragraph on Babel as the hidden spy upon his subject, the intruder whom no one suspects; and he makes some brilliant distinctions between West European Gothic and the architecture of Russian churches, entering which "we seem to creep under a blanket, to throw a fur-coat over our head." His meditations on Russian art from which sculpture is oddly missing are comparable with those of Mandelstam on the fluidity of Russian experience through history, its want of an acropolis and containing walls. Sinyavsky has the potential of an outstanding critic in the line of Mandelstam himself, or Tynyanov. But it is not for the criticism on its pages that *A Voice from the Chorus* is most remarkable.

For what, then?

IF THE CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS have an added depth and urgency, this derives from the totality of his experience; and the supreme value of Sinyavsky's book lies in the way this experience is recorded and interpreted by a mind that moves continually from books to life, and from life to books. Sinyavsky does not cease to be the intellectual, even the bookman, that he was when he went in.

> What is the most precious, the most agitating smell that awaits you at home, when you return after it may be ten years? You think the smell of roses? No, the mouldering of books.

But in the time between his arrest and the unexpected release that came upon him in the sixth year he has learned the importance not only of the Voice—the thinking, reading, detached self—but also of the Chorus.

The seven parts of his book—one for each of the five complete years in prison, a sixth for the last interrupted year, a seventh for his return to the outer world—form a meditation in time, with particular themes allotted each their turn: on the effects of prison life, or on sex, or death, or dreams, or Russian religious thought. As Igor Golomshtok says in his very helpful afterword, the changing relationship between Voice and Chorus is a complicated and finally an insupportable one. Sinyavsky came to suffer from the perpetual lack of privacy: "you grow tired of feeling upon your cheek the concentrated stare of your neighbour. You want to brush it off like a fly, but it creeps and stops you from writing." (He found it difficult to read the "magnificent letters" from his small son, because "the flies would settle on the unusually big characters" they were scrawled in.) And in the second half of the book the Voice very largely takes over. But all it says now must be subtly different because of the earlier interchanges with the Chorus. Golomshtok claims these are "perhaps the first genuine *Notes from the House of the Dead*"; and the Chorus plays an essential part in the meditation, chiming in with its own comments that are sometimes grotesquely alien to Sinyavsky's thought, and sometimes starkly revealing of human life.

It must have been a temptation for Sinyavsky to treat many of his interlocutors as Thomas Hardy would a Joseph Poorgrass or a Henery Fray. There are plenty of comic locutions that come to his ears, and of course he delighted in them. He gives a list of "precise definitions" among which appear:

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A bust of Pushkin full length.
I have attained my fiasco.
You've a bourgeois vein in your head.
Firstly, three reasons.
This immorally stable person.

There are curious personifications like Asphalt Betonovich; statements that have a nonsensical gravity such as "Moscow is the capital: people come there from all over the world in hats", or "Buy yourself slippers, and at once you feel like King Lear"; and contributions to debate like "All the same, Woman enjoys great popularity in the world", "The man who takes no risk never gets into prison", and "I adhere to the Japanese principle of politeness." Or somebody among the religious prisoners will claim: "I only need five minutes looking at a wall to tell you that in this wall there is more evil, and in that, less. . . . Good, it is true, I have not yet learned to make out." Scores of such memorabilia Sinyavsky has noted down, together with malapropisms and popular distortions of learned words. But he never condescends, partly because he is a fellow prisoner of the speakers, and partly because the tradition of Russian literature is one that recognises oddity without forgetting the right of everyone to be taken seriously. Sinyavsky does not listen with irony or impatience. He understands that the Chorus are what Mashurina is called in the final sentence of Turgenev's *Virgin Soil*—"anonymous Russia."

SINYAVSKY REMARKS that Russia—because of its "native formlessness"—is "in that sense a most favourable soil for the experience and imagination of the artist, although his fate in life is sometimes terrible." The other occupants of the three camps in which Sinyavsky found himself provided many insights into what could be termed the various counter-cultures in the Soviet Union.

He was fascinated by the professional criminals with their poet's vanity; and also by their apocryphal legends about Pushkin who (with Spartacus) has become a thieves' hero. The prisoners suffering for their religious faith restored to him an aspect of Russia that Leskov knew well and officially does not exist. Both the criminals and the religious lived by a definite code—that of the criminals being in his view stricter than the nobleman's code of honour. A great deal of miscellaneous lore comes into Sinyavsky's book—for instance, that the West German police are surprisingly humane, and the most interesting people in their country. One vagabond Russian drunk was taken up by these police. "A cell on his own. Suddenly, the good-natured, fat-cheeked face of a *Schutzmann*. . . ." He brought a mug of beer and gave the only greeting in Russian he knew: "*Smert' nemetskim okkupantam!* (Death to the German invaders!)."

Sinyavsky also had the opportunity to watch the Russian language in its popular forms still active and growing. Why, he asks, have foreign words like *aeroplan* and *kaloshi* ousted the native equivalents for "aeroplane" and "galoshes"? Because they happen to fit in with Slavonic words that can be overlaid on their meaning. Thus *aeroplan* not only evokes the Russian word for swimming (*plavanie*), but it also suggests the era of the Plan. *Dirizhabl'* (airship) "is in the first count a toad" (*zhaba*). And, among other things, it seems the natural successor to *dilizhans* (*diligence*, a stage-coach). In the prison camps he came to appreciate more fully the tentacular associations of words, just as for the first time he realised the rightness of traditional or as he calls them "constant" epithets—the dark forest, the damp earth.

HIS RELEASE CAME without warning in June 1971. Three months before he had written:

> The other day, looking at the forest which had always been remote and inaccessible I suddenly thought, this is my forest, and was surprised at such freedom in my ideas. That is what spring means. Next year, I suppose, I shan't have time for these subtleties. And here the last spring but one gradually becomes my own, as though tomorrow I were to be free.

Surprisingly, when freedom arrived, Sinyavsky felt like a spectre. Time in prison is strangely dislocated, when letters take a month in coming, and a month in reaching the recipient outside. Returning to that life which has gone on all these years without him, the prisoner is like one brought back from the dead. "You find you are naked before people, and this nakedness sticks like a lump in your throat." But slowly the prisoner resumes his place. "They can't understand. The prisoner is eternally grateful for white bread. . . . And again very many thanks: the sense that your back is not exposed. . . . How much it means in life—a table lamp." And then the writer speaks in him: "Of this sheet of paper I dreamed as of the field, the forest. . . ." Like Yury Zhivago seeing the worktable at Varykino, he has only one thought—to begin.

A Voice from the Chorus will take its place among a series of modern classics in the literature of endurance which begins with Mandelstam's poems from Voronezh, and includes Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*, Lydia Chukovskaya's *The Deserted House*, Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. There is no call to judge exactly where its place would come in an order of merit. The important thing is that Sinyavsky's book belongs to the class. Only in this class does the literature of the Soviet Union tell the truth about Russian life, and thereby accept what the best writers of Russia have seen as their obligation and their fate.

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Charles Causley

Ward 14

Today, incredibly, the nurse
Attempts to reason with her—
The mother with the brain three-quarters struck away
By apoplexy, and other
Assorted fevers and indignities as the body
Slides slowly, O so slowly, to harbour.

"Wake up!" orders the nurse, kindly.
"Open your eyes."

The mother does so.
"Your son is here," says the nurse:
A razor-voice stained momentarily with a little sugar.

"You musn't cry
When your son is here.
Mothers don't cry
When their sons are here.
Now be a good girl;
That's a good girl."

Puzzled, the mother stares at her:
Wonder creasing the face.
"You're going to be a good girl
Now that your son is here
Aren't you?"
"Yes," says the mother rapidly,
Wide-eyed, astounded.

Her task accomplished, the nurse
Clops purposefully away down the ward
Like a fractious charger
After a small battle.

As soon as she has gone, the mother
Breaks once more into swift, unceasing tears
Of pain, misery, frustration.
The other visitors look at the son
With a compassionate air;
Rather less so at the patient.

Weep on, mother!
It is your right.
It is your due.
Helpless at the foot of your crucifixion
He is not going to deny you that.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Moscow & the New Left

From Mao & Marcuse to Marx

By Klaus Mehnert

THE IDEAL SITUATION of a single world-wide coordinated ideology (it would, of course, be Soviet Communism) has so far proved unattainable. In the eyes of the Russian leaders all other ideologies, among which they include the various religions and creeds, are basically enemies, even when this is not admitted or when tactical reasons require friendly relations with some of them (the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, or certain Christian groups, for instance).

But there are differences. Many of the foreign "ideologies" are taken seriously, others rather less so. The Soviets have no fear of the synthetic "bourgeois-liberal" or conservative-type ideologies produced by the West (People's Capitalism, *die formierte Gesellschaft, Gaullisme,* and so forth). They have a healthy respect for the West's military strength and they look with envy upon its standard of living and its far greater measure of personal opportunity; ideologically, however, they see no danger here. Nor are there any fascist ideologies which carry any weight.

The non-Soviet ideologies of the Left are something quite different, no matter whether they are personified by communists like Tito, Mao, and Dubcek, or Western writers like Jean-Paul Sartre or Herbert Marcuse. These the Kremlin has taken to be genuine rivals diverting the Left-wing stream into their own channels to the detriment of the Moscow-orientated Communist parties.

Until Stalin was challenged by Tito, Moscow lived under the illusion that, apart from a few tiny sects and one or two traitors, Communism and Soviet Communism were identical, that the Soviet Union was the "workers' fatherland." Then, however, came the post-War disillusionments. Dr Kurt Schumacher, the German Social-Democratic leader, managed to mobilise the German workers against Moscow; Tito, a communist, asserted himself in face of Stalin; Mao, another communist, asserted himself in face of the Khrushchevs and Brezhnevs of this world. Finally arrived the New Left, Marcuse and his "werewolves."

What an ironic situation! At last, *at last,* a revolutionary mood had emerged in the capitalist countries. Academic youth, the pride and pillar of the Western world, was raging in its universities; bearing red flags they were marching on the White House or even—how encouraging!—on that den of lions known as the Pentagon; they were tearing up and burning their draft-cards; they were going to prison or into exile rather than into barracks. Lenin's dream of the world-wide flowering of communism seemed to be coming true.

But what a disillusionment! None of this was happening at the bidding or to the glory of Moscow nor to the profit of the Communist parties in these Western countries; they were either ignored or used as targets for violent criticism of "totalitarian Soviet communism." More often than not, quotations from Marx or Lenin were used against Stalin and his successors, referring in the same breath to Bakunin, Marx's anarchist enemy and opponent, or—worse still—Rosa Luxemburg and her critical comments on Lenin's authoritarian methods.

Necessarily, therefore, an ambivalent attitude was adopted. On the one hand, Moscow welcomed the revolt of Leftist youth in the West as a symptom of the approaching end of the capitalist system. On the other hand, horror was expressed not only at the anarchistic, but also the anti-Soviet, trend of this revolt and at its refusal to cooperate with or subordinate itself to the Communist party. Moscow was forced to stand by and look on while the youthful rebels

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drew totally different conclusions from their analyses of Western society, similar though the analyses were to those of Soviet communism. The emergence of the New Left, therefore, contributed a further degree of fragmentation to an already fragmented communist world.

OF COURSE IT COULD BE SAID that the New Left—with Dr Marcuse's assistance—had at least reached the ante-chamber of Marxism and would one day find the road to true Soviet Marxism. Many Soviet ideologists comforted themselves with this hope when wrestling with this tortuous Left-wing Western intelligentsia. In fact why should not the path to Marx lead *via* Mao and Marcuse (in other words, *via* the second and third *M*s to the first and only true *M*)?

Such a development is not outside the bounds of possibility. In fact the New Left—Mao and Marcuse, for instance—base themselves on Marx and Lenin. But the history of the great schisms in the past does not point in this direction. Four-and-a-half centuries have passed since Wittenberg and the Reformation, and the Protestants have not returned to the Vatican nor have the various sects to which they have given birth looked homeward to Rome. For Brezhnev, however, Mao is more dangerous than Luther ever was to the Pope. Throughout the world of today the Trotskyists are more implacable foes of the Kremlin and more numerous now than the tiny handful of disciples who venerated the "Old Man" until his murder in Mexico.

Among the New Left, crowded with innumerable groups all professing socialist ideals, there will undoubtedly be some who will one day tire of the internal left-wing conflicts and will desert to their own country's Communist party and the haven of Soviet communism, the sole source of bliss. Many of them will become faithful *apparatchiks;* others, accustomed to intellectual freedom, will cause the Party some headaches by their indiscipline. This will not alter the over-all trend—the decline in Kremlin authority. Few Soviet writers now express confidence that in course of time the New Left will become a reliable ally of Moscow; usually they only give vent to a pious hope.

***A** SMALL GALLERY OF MARXISTS:*

Weltwoche (Zürich)

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The long hair and tasselled jackets of the New Left, its grotesque, farcical, disorderly, unkempt, Bohemian, hippy-like attitude, in short its drop-out atmosphere, are as abhorrent to Moscow as they are to Washington. The reaction clearly shows that present-day Soviet Communism and its leaders are basically stolid and resistant to change. In their view, therefore, the New Left has not only been moving in the wrong direction but has done so in a highly vulgar fashion which the Soviet leaders—who set no little store by respectability—find repellent. (I may add from my own experience that a large proportion, if not the majority, of the Soviet population feel the same.)

MOSCOW'S SITUATION may be summarised as follows: the "Left" (in inverted commas, Moscow-style), i.e. the adherents of the Maos and Marcuses of this world, are good if they turn into the Left (without inverted commas), *i.e.*, adherents of Moscow. "Left-wingers", however, who remain "Left-wingers" and even turn potential Left-wingers into "Left-wingers" are bad—worse indeed than if they were Right-wingers. How nice it would be if, as in the good old days before Mao and Marcuse, there were only loyal goodness on the Left and evil badness on the Right!

In general terms the reaction of Soviet journalism to the New Left can be divided into three phases. Until early 1968 it was ignored; then came a sense of extreme disgust leading to downright hostility to this new unruly element; finally, it was taken really seriously, though the picture was painted in varying colours. It has not been an easy time for the Soviet journalists. They have welcomed the youthful vitality of this criticism of Western society coming from an unexpected quarter; at the same time, however, they are worried about the direction it is taking and the form it has assumed. Moreover, they know that on high, among the Party leaders, this New Left is primarily regarded as a tiresome rival, and also as an infection potentially dangerous to their own population, to be accepted as sympathetic recruits only with considerable reservations.

Nevertheless it seems to me that, in dealing with the New Left, Soviet journalists have shown more interest and diligence and have said more sensible things than they have in the case of Chairman Mao. There are a number of reasons for this. In the first place, quite apart from the language difficulty, China remains a closed world to Russian journalists. Then there is the special risk that any utterance about Peking could draw a devastating reply from the mighty Chinese propaganda machine, and so make the author responsible for subjecting his own country to a journalistic slap-in-the face in the argument now in progress.

More important than all, however, as I know from numerous conversations, Maoism exerts no form of intellectual attraction upon the Moscow ideologists. In fact it is basically repugnant to them—even among a hundred, or a thousand, one would hardly find an exception to this rule. The Soviet ideologists to whom I talked invariably showed pain and surprise at the fact that I even took the trouble to read and study it.

THEIR ATTITUDE TO the New Left is quite different. Admittedly it too is a heresy, a potentially dangerous heresy in fact; but it stems from a world they know. It is understandable; it even exerts a certain fascination. I suspect that many a Soviet ideologist finds entirely comprehensible, perhaps even agrees with, many of the ideas emerging from the New Left, *e.g.*, the special role of the intelligentsia in the present-day era, or the repressive role of the technocratic state. In contrast to Maoism with its extraordinary sayings in the *Little Red Book*, the New Left uses a familiar range of expressions; it has adopted many well-known phrases from the Russians' own ideological tradition. And when it invents new ones, they can be absorbed without difficulty—like foreign scientific terms. So one finds Soviet journalism, without explanation, using words like *"cheppening"* (happening), *"chippi"* (hippie), *"frustraziya"* (frustration), *"isteblischment"* (establishment), *"relevantnost"* (relevance), *"titsch-in"* (teach-in), and even *"seksapilny"*—yes, you've guessed right—the adjective of "sex appeal."

Yet the reaction was slow and ponderous. Soviet ideologists make very heavy weather of unexpected intellectual developments. This attitude on the part of the Eastern world is the precise opposite of the hectic involvement with which the West reacted. When something happens in the ideological field in the East (Khrushchev removes Stalin's halo—the Cultural Revolution breaks out in China—the Czech writers run amok—Solzhenitsyn publishes a new novel in the West), whole armies of Western intellectuals hurl themselves into the fray. Having no need to reinsure themselves with either Right or Left, they let loose their analyses and prognoses upon the market. Innumerable little streams of thought gush forth, the majority of which gradually find their way into the same river-bed. A general consensus is formed, but there are always some who do not agree; and this leads to further intellectual revision of the various positions. Much is pure speculation since accurate information from the East is lacking. Months or years later,

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however, it turns out that the view on which the majority of experts ultimately agreed, was not so very far from the truth.

This "hit-and-miss" method, this lively, contradictory, and entirely uninhibited discussion, is something unknown in Communist countries. No Soviet manager would dare to open a brown button factory unless it was provided for in "The Plan." Similarly no Soviet ideologist will pronounce upon a question known to be thorny until the Party has laid down the line or opened the matter for discussion—within limits. This takes time, however.

Soviet scholasticism finds it very difficult to integrate unforeseen developments into its system. For any journalist to try to do this ahead of time, and on his own initiative, would be presumptuous and dangerous. Nevertheless, sometimes more is forthcoming than one would have expected, not in the shape of fresh ideas but at least in so far as information is concerned. This is certainly so in the case of the "New Left."

Beyond the Finzi-Contini Garden

Mussolini's "Fascist Racism" — By M. VAN CREVELD

VITTORIO DE SICA'S FILM OF *The Garden of the Finzi-Contini,* based on the novel by Giorgio Bassani has recently been commanding public attention, and deservedly so. It offered deep insights into the essence of a world doomed to disappear yet refusing to believe in its own imminent destruction. It was a masterly achievement.

Yet penetrating as the film was, it had nothing to say about the origins and nature of Fascist racism. Here it was in crowded company, for in spite of the many books and countless articles that have been written around this subject the question as to why Mussolini suddenly decided to adopt a racist policy which was, *prima facie,* totally out of step with Italian history and Italian traditions, remains fundamentally open. Most of the answers given revolve either about Mussolini's alliance with Hitler or about his conquest of Abyssinia. It has been claimed that, when he was slowly being drawn into the *Fuehrer's* orbit, the Italian dictator felt the need to "emulate his Nazi colleague."[1] Yet there is no doubt but that Hitler never pressed Mussolini into an anti-Semitic policy of any kind. In all the conversations between Italian and German officials during the years 1936–37 it was the Italians who first brought up the subject.[2] And in any case, why should Mussolini want to "emulate" precisely that Nazi theory which, for so many years (and as recently as 1934), he had denounced as senseless stupidity?[3] Why did he give up his opinion, which he frankly expressed both to Hitler and to other foreign statesmen, that Nazi anti-Semitism had already brought down numerous unnecessary enemies upon Germany?[4] To say that Mussolini wanted to "emulate" Hitler is, in any case, no answer at all. For the question immediately rises *why* he wanted to do so—why in 1938 and not, for instance, in the summer of 1922, when he returned from a visit to Berlin with extremely bad impressions about the anti-Semitism of the German Right?[5]

The other explanation attempts to forge a link between Fascist racism and the Abyssinian campaign, and it is not really more convincing. It is claimed that Mussolini first became "race conscious" after his victory there. This was a reaction to the phenomenon of "*madamismo*", the concubinage of Abyssinian women with Italian troops. This fact, it is claimed, led Mussolini to seriously consider, for the first time, the whole problem of Race and Racism; and in 1937 he therefore enacted the first laws that were designated to prevent inter-

[1] The most eminent writer of this school explains Mussolini's anti-Semitism mainly on the basis of the desire "to strengthen the Italo-German alliance" by eliminating "any sharp contrasts between the two régimes." R. de Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Rome, 1962), p. 286.

[2] *E.g.* the meetings between Mussolini and Hans Frank (April 1936), Anfuso and Hitler (April 1936) or Edda Ciano and Schmidt (June 1936). *Cf.* H. Frank, *Im Angesicht des Galgens* (Neuhaus-bei-Schliersee, 1955), p. 22; M. Magistrati, *L'Italia a Berlino* (Milan, 1950), p. 602; F. Anfuso, *Da Palazzo Venezia al Lago Gardia* (Rome, 1948), pp. 18–21; Paul Schmidt, *Statist auf Diplomatischer Bühne* (Bonn, 1953), p. 579.

[3] See his article in *Popolo d'Italia* of 6 and 8 September 1934, entitled "Fallacia ariana e razze e razzismo."

[4] R. von Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini* (London, 1942), p. 170.

[5] *Popolo d'Italia,* 25 June 1922; also *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani,* vii serie (Rome, 1955) vol. ii, p. 318.

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course between "*nazionali*" and "*indigeni.*"[6] But the years 1935–37 were in some ways the best Italian Jews had had under Fascism.[7] This theory also leaves open the question as to why Mussolini waited from March 1936—the end of the Abyssinian campaign—to July 1938 before promulgating a full anti-Semitic doctrine. In any case it is remarkable that neither Abyssinia nor the Abyssinians are so much as mentioned in the "Racial Manifesto" published in that month.[8] If there is any specific problem that can raise eyebrows for *not* being mentioned in that document it is certainly the Abyssinian one.

IN MY OWN VIEW, the clue to Mussolini's sudden decision to adopt a racial policy is to be sought not in any external event such as the alliance with Germany or the Abyssinian campaign but in the "Racial Manifesto" itself. This is a curious pseudo-scientific document. It was signed by ten "eminent professors" (investigations reveal that some of the "professors" were just teaching assistants); but, as we know from the diary of Mussolini's son-in-law Ciano, was drawn up by the *Duce* himself.[9] It consists of ten points which may be divided up as follows. Articles 1–3 offer a "scientific" exposition of the racial doctrine. Articles 4–8 are concerned with the definition of the "Italian" race. Article 9 concerns the Jews; and Article 10 refers to intermarriage. Taken as an anti-Semitic document, the structure of the Manifesto is remarkable in the sense that the Jewish problem, far from forming its core and most important subject, is mentioned only in one article and even then in conjunction with other "Semites" and "Arabs." Indeed, to judge by the space allotted to each of the topics, it is mainly concerned with the definition of the "Italian" race and with the establishment of the Italian nation's "title of nobility." In comparison to this, the entire Jewish question appears as a rather secondary appendix.

Any attempt to understand Mussolini's racism as an emulation of the doctrines adhered to in Germany should really be ruled out by the statement, in Article 7, that the Italians' proclamation of themselves as racists "does not mean the introduction into Italy of the German racial theories as they are." In issuing his "Racial Manifesto" Mussolini was *not* adopting the German concepts. On the contrary, he was setting up a new and equally confused theory of his own that stood in direct and deliberate contradiction to everything the Germans taught. It is true, of course, that Mussolini insisted on the originality of Fascism every time he adopted this or that German gimmick; and this fact is itself a highly significant one in any attempt to understand the psychology of the man and the movement he created. The so-called *Passo Romano* (clearly shown in the same film to be a rather unsuccessful imitation of the German goose-step but which Mussolini stubbornly defended as a *Ur*-Italian invention[10]) is a case in point. It is not surprising that Mussolini decided to adopt the goose-step—force, precision, regularity, and discipline formed an essential, if never attained, goal of Fascism from its inception. But the same cannot be said of racism. There was very little racism in Italy prior to 1937; and even after that year it never really stuck—like the goose-step, it formed the topic of endless sour jokes.

MUSSOLINI'S REAL PROBLEM in issuing his "Racial Manifesto" was not so much how to defile the Jews as how to defend the Italians' pride in their own nationality *against* the German concepts. For these concepts, whatever their precise significance, did not reckon the Italians among the "master" Nordic race. Although "Aryan" the Italians were not "Germanic" but "Mediterranean" or "Latin", and therefore inferior. As long as Mussolini and Hitler did not see eye to eye the *Duce* could dismiss the whole of the Fuehrer's doctrines as idiotic claptrap, which was precisely what he did.[11] But when the German–Italian rapprochement began in earnest the *Duce* found himself facing a difficult dilemma. On one hand, he could not continue to dismiss the German theories as stupid and dangerous nonsense, since experience had shown that Hitler was very touchy on this point which he regarded as central to his whole ideology.[12] On the other hand, he could not simply adopt the concept of the Master-Race *in toto*, without relegating the Italians to an inferior position. The result was an attempt to formulate an independent Italian racial doctrine which, unlike the *Passo Romano*, did in fact differ considerably from its German counterpart.

This, then, was the real purpose behind the Racial Manifesto. It appropriately opened with

[6] For this view see in particular L. Pretti, *I mitti dell'Impero e della razza nell' Italia degli anni* '30 (Rome, 1965).

[7] De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei*, pp. 221–7.

[8] Printed in Pretti, *I mitti dell'Impero*, pp. 113–15.

[9] G. Ciano, *Diario 1937-38* (Milan, 1948), p. 209, entry for 14 July 1938. For the Manifesto's "secret history", see also de Felice, *Storia*, pp. 325–26.

[10] Mussolini's speech of 25 October 1938, printed in Pretti, *I mitti dell'Impero*, pp. 122–28.

[11] In 1932 he referred to them as "absurd." E. Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini* (Milan, 1950) p. 73.

[12] On 31 March 1934 Mussolini had sent his Ambassador in Berlin, Cerruti, to Hitler with a letter advising the German dictator to renounce his anti-Semitic policy. In response Hitler had said that the *Duce* "did not know what he was talking about. . . ." De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei*, pp. 148–50.

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the words: "To say that there exist different human races does not mean to say, *a priori*, that some of these races are superior to others." Having made it quite clear that Germans were not superior to Italians the *Duce* came to his second dilemma, *i.e.* to define races in such a way that they should not coincide with nations. Whereas the Germans claimed to possess a racial affinity with at least some of their neighbours (*viz* the Dutch, Scandinavians, and English), Mussolini was precluded from doing the same. The German claim that everything that was best in Europe's peoples was due to the "Germanic blood" in them prevented him from

Letter from New York:

THE DIMINUTION OF VIOLENCE *on American campuses has given rise to a surge of hope that a healthier climate of opinion will soon prevail in the academy. At least students in larger measure are prepared to resist interference with their right to learn, by small fanatical groups who hurl ultimata at faculties and administrators, threatening to close down the university if something they object to is done or something they demand is not done. Are recent developments evidence that we will soon reach the shores of academic comity that once prevailed?*

Would that it were so! Unhappily, signs are multiplying that if direct threats to academic freedom from radical students are dwindling, they are gathering force once again from certain groups among faculties. Under the pretext of shielding the individual subjects of experimental research from abuse and exploitation, guidelines are being drawn to forbid or censor inquiry into social themes if the upshot of the research "may place the reputation or status of a social group or an institution in jeopardy." These words are drawn from the policy statement of Chancellor Albert H. Bowker of the University of California at Berkeley.[1] *Bowker's guidelines are currently being implemented by a faculty committee whose task is to screen all faculty research projects.*

THIS ATTEMPT to protect groups and institutions from the risks of social research, regardless of the scientific validity of the methods followed and results won, is presently inspired by the attempts to choke off any research designed to test the weight of genetic factors in behavioural differences among races, the sexes, and other groups. It is also related to the efforts of a small militant group at M.I.T. to bar any defence-oriented work on American campuses in full knowledge that the nuclear power of Soviet Russia and China is growing ever greater.

To scholars and researchers such pressures are no news. Everyone learned about Galileo who was forced to recant his heliocentric teachings because they were subversive in the eyes of the 16th-century church. The novelty is only in the fact that contrary to past experience, when threats and censorship originated outside the academy, the present inquisitors sit within its very walls.

[1] Bowker was formerly Chancellor of the City University of New York which he deserted after introducing the open admissions policy that resulted in the scholarly collapse of the once prestigious City College.

THE SERIOUS THREAT *to academic freedom in this current attempt to subject the quest for truth to the public good, as some selected or elected committee sees that good, is obvious on its very face. The language in which the policy is drawn is startling in its intellectual crudity, and in its insensitivity to the long history of scientific persecutions undertaken to safeguard the salvation of the Soul or the foundations of Law-and-Order or the progress of the Revolution. The policy statement declares:*

> "Procedures designed to measure the characteristics of easily defined sub-groups of a culture may entail risk if the qualities measured are ones which have positive or negative value in the eyes of the group."

What this means is that if any sub-group within a culture feels threatened by the possible outcome of an inquiry, regardless of the scientific integrity of the researcher (or even because of it), they have not merely a right to protest under the Bill of Rights but a legitimate claim to stop or abort the research. The degree to which the subjective sensibilities of those affected by research is to be taken into account is spelled out in detail:

> "Likewise, an institution, such as a church, a university, or a prison, must be guarded against derogation, for many people may be affiliated with or employed by the institution, and pejorative information about it would injure their reputations and self-esteem."

But the truth may be pejorative! And legitimately so if it uncovers a forgery, a conspiracy against the public interest, a padded payroll, a diploma mill, or a fraud which promises individuals real estate in heaven on condition they surrender all their real estate on earth to some cosmic confidence man.

LET ME EXAMINE *some hypothetical cases of genuine research which would certainly be tabooed by Chancellor Bowker's guidelines.*

The role of Jews in the rise of capitalism is an interesting and highly disputed topic ever since Marx's unfair essay "Zur Judenfrage" written in violation of the very principles of historical materialism he subsequently developed. Sombart and other writers developed aspects of this theme. Today, capitalism in many circles, including some universities, has become not a descriptive epithet but one of abuse; and the memories of Hitler's identifications of "international Jewry", and "international plutocratic capitalism" are still raw among

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saying the same about the Italian blood. Mussolini could not claim affinity with some supposed "Mediterranean" race because this would mean accepting an inferior position in the German scheme of things; and he could not claim a common "Latin" ancestry with France because France was the main political enemy. Hence he was forced, unlike the Germans, to make the "Italian" race into something *sui generis*. He had to claim that only members of the Italian nation belonged to the Italian "race."

This would, of course, have laid him open to the "scientific" objection that under his scheme Nation and Race were really one and the same

—*Dangerous Doubts*—

those who suffered from his maniacal obsession. And now suppose an economist announces as his research project the role of Jews in the development of capitalism. If his conclusions confirm Marx's contention that Judaism as a religion is the very essence of capitalism, this will certainly "injure the reputation and self-esteem" of Jews who are the favourite scapegoats of every western culture in distress. Would they not be entitled to protection from "the risks" of such research?

Suppose a highly qualified psychologist or anthropologist is intrigued by A. A. Goldenweiser's famous essay on "Why Are There No Women Geniuses?" His answer is *not* that they never had a chance, for he argues that when it comes to performance women are equal or superior to men; but when it comes to creation they fall far behind even when they have had favoured opportunities. He cites evidence from the history of music, the theatre, poetry, education, religion. Goldenweiser attributes the difference in creative capacity to the biological factors. Now if a research project was undertaken to test Goldenweiser's hypothesis on a wide scale and it seemed likely to confirm his findings, we can be sure that many women would be sincerely wounded in their self-esteem. They would denounce the whole project as an expression of "male chauvinism," and Ms. Beatrice Sandler would write hysterical letters to the press demanding that an affirmative action programme be adopted to equalize the number of geniuses among men and women more nearly to the numerical sexual ratios in the general population. A faculty committee following Chancellor Bowker's guidelines would squash the research project.

Finally, consider a project designed to establish the relative I.Q.s of the ranking bureaucrats of Washington's HEW compared with those who have failed to win appointment or promotion to the positions in question. Or a project to test whether students at University X, which proudly advertises its scholastic programmes, can solve any better on graduation a set of problems of comparable difficulty to those they were tested on at the outset of their student career. "Many people [are] affiliated with or employed by the institutions," says Bowker's statement. What would be the effect on them if it were discovered that the overwhelming majority of HEW executives had much lower I.Q.s than those rejected, or that students graduating from University X were less able to solve problems of the same difficulty than when they began their schooling? Surely this would have a disastrous effect if not on HEW, then on any university. In face of such a risk, how could a committee approve the project?

One faculty apologist for Chancellor Bowker's attempt to protect individuals from the social risk of untrammeled research seeks to evade the issue by making it appear that the policy is designed only to protect the individual from the invasion of his privacy. This is palpably an ignoratio elenchi. *Law and ethics protect the individual from becoming an object or subject of medical research without his consent. But when we are dealing with groups or institutions, whether racial or political or educational, to insist that "when there is risk-taking, the subjects must give their consent" is manifestly absurd. Must all Jews or Blacks or Women give their consent before a project whose findings may affect their* amour propre *can be undertaken? Must all students be canvassed for permission to determine how effective their instruction has been?*

PERHAPS THE MOST DANGEROUS *observation—and the one most insulting of all to the intelligence of his colleagues—is the assurance offered by a faculty spokesman for Chancellor Bowker's guidelines to those alarmed by implicit threat to academic freedom. Although insisting that the committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research does have the authority to deny any research project which in its judgment involves risks not commensurate to benefits, he pleads in extenuation that they have not yet exercised the authority. But what the Committee has not done until today, it may very well do tomorrow. What is intellectually scandalous and morally outrageous is that in principle it claims to have the authority and power to censor the research projects of scholars whose integrity and competence have been certified by their peers.*

The future of academic freedom is today threatened more seriously from within than has been the case at any time in the past. It is being threatened by faithless servitors among administrators and teachers fearful of incurring the hostility of militant political groups for whom academic freedom is merely a vested interest of a parasitic class. Will the American professoriat have the courage to live up to the ethics of its calling?

Sidney Hook

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thing, and that the peculiarities of the Italian "race" were not racial at all but due to historical circumstances. This was an accusation to which Mussolini was extremely sensitive. In Article 3 he wrote:

> The racial concept is a purely biological one. It is, therefore, founded on bases different from those standing behind the concepts of peoples and nations, which are essentially historical, linguistical, and religious. Nevertheless, behind the differences between peoples and nations there lurk racial differences. If Italians are different from Frenchmen, Germans, Turks, Greeks etc., this is not only because they have a different language and history, but because the racial constitution of these peoples is different.

Having thus come to grips with one horn of the dilemma and established the essential difference of the Italians *vis-à-vis* their neighbours in racial terms, Mussolini tried to avoid the impression that each of these peoples constitutes a separate race by introducing a scale of racial value. It differed from the German one in so far as it did not recognise a single "Master race" to which the others are compared, but was based on racial purity. The various peoples are said to constitute "a mixture of races in different proportions", and their value on the racial scale was proportional not to their proximity to any Supreme Race but to their degree of Purity and the length of the period during which they have presumably been "uncontaminated". On this basis it was not difficult to make the Italian race into the most valuable of all—because

> The incoming of great masses of people in historical times is a legend. . . . While the racial composition of other European nations has altered considerably even in recent periods, the grand lines of racial composition have remained essentially the same in Italy during the last thousand years.

On this basis, too, it was possible to claim that "the purity of its blood" made the Italians the greatest race of all—and yet avoid a direct confrontation with Hitler's racial doctrines which for political reasons was undesirable.

HOWEVER, TO SAY THAT the Italian race was unmixed did not yet answer the question as to what *kind* of race it was. Somebody might still presume to say that the Italians were a Mediterranean or a Latin race, admittedly "pure" but nevertheless inferior to the "Nordic" or "Germanic" ones. To counter this difficulty Mussolini proceeded to abolish the "essential" differences among the "European" races—differences so clear to the Nazi heart. He claimed that "the population of present-day Italy is of Aryan origin." He then proceeded to reinforce this apparently somewhat dubious statement by adding that "its civilisation is Aryan." In other words, Italians and Germans were so basically similar that intermarriage among them would not make it possible to talk of a "real hybrid." True, "this does not mean . . . that Italians and Scandinavians are one and the same thing", but only that the Italians have to put before their eyes a "physical and above all psychological model of human race" having "purely European characteristics."

Reading between these tortuous phrases, one can sense the measure of Mussolini's frustration. It was no easy matter to be allied with a *Herrenvolk* that regarded itself as the crown of creation and relegated everybody else to an inferior status. Yet it was precisely for this reason that an alliance with them was so desirable. In the Germans Mussolini found all the qualities of discipline, valour, and "hardness" which he would so dearly have wished for his own people, but which he was finally forced to recognise they did not possess. If only Italians and Nordics *were* one and the same thing! Then this whole doctrinal casuistry would not have been necessary, and Mussolini could have looked Hitler straight in the eye. As it was he had to rack his brain in order to invent complicated theories which, a few years earlier (and again a few years later, when he became disillusioned with Hitler) he would have dismissed simply as humbug. Since the Italians were—unfortunately—a people of "little fat men"[13] there remained nothing for them to do but to exert themselves like a Nordic race of "giants." They had to perform the goose-step as well as they could. They must strive towards "a new and superior ideal", something "Aryan-Nordic." A tall, blue-eyed and blond ideal.

Above all, Mussolini was afraid somebody might commit the terrible error of attributing a non-European origin to the Italians. Such an origin would relegate them to an even lower place on the Nazi scale of racial rank! Since he could not very well claim that Italians were "Germanic"—had he been able to do this, it is probable that Fascist racism would never have come into the world—he did mention the word in his Manifesto. He wrote only about "European" races with inessential differences between them, at the same time sharply distinguishing them from the non-European ones. It must never enter anybody's head—especially a German head—that the Italian race contains an admixture of non-European blood! For

> nothing has remained of the Semites who, in the course of the centuries, invaded the sacred soil of our fatherland. Even the Arab occupation of Sicily has left nothing except for a few names.

[13] Mussolini's speech of 25 October 1938, printed in Pretti, *I mitti dell'Impero.*

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> The theories proposing an African origin to some European peoples, and including in a common Mediterranean race Semitic and Hamitic populations are dangerous and absolutely inadmissible.

THIS BRINGS US TO the Jews. Precisely because "they are constituted of non-European racial elements" they had never been "assimilated in Italy."

If such a disaster were ever to happen the Italians would inevitably fall back into the inferior status from which (by so many logical contortions) they had just extracted themselves. Hence the famous slogan: *discriminare non persequitare*. This, according to de Felice, represented Mussolini's sincere intention. His aim was to get the Jews out of Italy, not to persecute or exterminate them. And when it came to a decision he would even be found defending the Jews.[14]

MUSSOLINI was never a real anti-Semite in the sense of "hating the Jews." His racism stemmed not from any feeling of aversion he had towards them but from his—and the Italians'—sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* Germany.

It is against this background that Italian racism becomes understandable and emerges from the historical obscurity to which it has been relegated. Far from being a sudden and isolated phenomenon, it appears as one of a great many manifestations of something one is tempted to call "a national inferiority complex." It dates back at least as far as the Renaissance,[15] and it probably constitutes an important factor in the rise of Italian Fascism. The Jews themselves, in Italy or elsewhere, had very little to do with all this. Modern Italian history contains only very scant evidence of anti-Semitism, and Mussolini himself could not be seriously accused of anti-Semitism prior to 1937. Had not his alliance with Hitler extended the "national inferiority complex" to the field of racial theory he would never have felt the need of an anti-Semitic policy. As it was, the Jews had the misfortune of being the only people of "non-European" racial origins in Italy, and for this reason were the target of discrimination.

It was a tragic and absurd measure of psychological self-defence. Fascist racism was not intended as an imitation of Nazi doctrine. It was, rather, a refutation thereof. As the French Ambassador told Ciano when Italy declared war, "the Germans are hard masters. . . ." Racially, too, this was the case.

[14] De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei*, p. 269.

[15] For some interesting observations on this "complex", see Luigi Barzini, *The Italians* (1968), p. 314 ff.

Translator to Poet

for Pablo Neruda, 1904-1973

There are only the words left now. They lie like tombstones
or the stone Andes where the green scrub ends.
I do not have the heart to chip away
at your long lists of joy, that alternate
their iron and velvet, all the vegetation
and whalebone on your chosen stormy coast.
So much was written hope, with every line
extending life by saying, every meeting
ending in expectation of the next.
It was your slow intoning voice that counted,
bringing a living Chile into being
where poetry was bread, where books were banquets.
Now they are silent, stony on the shelf.
I cannot read them for the thunderous silence,
the grief of Chile's dying and your own,
death being the one definitive translation.

Alastair Reid

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ADORNO

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There's a Hole in Your Beckett

The Inflation of Minimalism—By ALLAN RODWAY

FOR A QUARTER of a century Beckett wrote without recognition. When *Waiting for Godot* brought him fame, he was almost fifty. Sixteen years later, the Nobel Prize for literature was his:

> one of the few Nobel choices about whom nobody argued; Beckett's right to that usually questionable Laureateship was unquestioned and obvious. He was a recognised world figure, an authority, a major influence.[1]

Even then a curmudgeon might have wondered whether his right was as obvious as it was unquestioned. But who could begrudge a reward so long deferred? Since then, however, his renown has grown in inverse ratio to the size of his works and, arguably, out of all proportion to their merits—an argument given further credence if his later miniatures are compared with the monsterpieces of Mann and Joyce: men with whom he has something, but not enough, in common. If he is a literary giant at all—and among the Absurdists at any rate he is indeed—he is perhaps a smaller giant than he is now taken for. In short, the current boom in Beckett, like all booms, seems to be inseparably linked with inflation.

Indeed, Mr Alvarez's generally excellent monograph is itself telling evidence of critical inflation; for after saying all the right, unfashionable things, after giving all the reasons for questioning the current reputation, he concludes as he began, in obvious agreement with fashionable estimates:

> His unassailable reputation among both experts and the general public is, I think, a tribute to his continual search for a special kind of perfection. . . . (p. 123)

Yet on the heels of this tribute comes one of many comments that might suggest that both experts and public have been too easily satisfied:

> "Hold a mirror to their lips, it mists"; the echo of King Lear's words emphasizes the distance between Shakespeare's universe and Beckett's. The devastated, post-atomic landscape outside the skull-room of *Endgame* has been reduced [in *Imagination Dead Imagine*] to this tiny moribund sphere lost in white space, a last image for the imagination to cling to in an inner space as blank as that between the galaxies. (p. 125)

Again,

> *Come and Go* lasts about three minutes and employs 121 spoken words. Apparently, even that came to seem excessive to Beckett. *Breath*, first staged in New York in 1969, lasts precisely 35 seconds and dispenses altogether with actors and words (p. 130) . . . a faint birth cry, a single breath in and out, a second faint cry, then silence: so much for life. (p. 131)

Only so much? Or, abjuring pessimism, somewhat more? Joyce and Mann, also holding no brief for the easy optimism of belief in a benevolently governed universe, certainly thought so. Consequently, the logical end of their works, as distinct from Beckett's, was not silence. Of their work, it is not true to say "the death instinct wins" (p. 115); nor are they faced with "a specific technical problem: that is how to keep an audience interested in [a] preoccupation with the boredom and pointlessness of life" (p. 90); nor yet are they embarrassed by "all that human clutter which Beckett is trying at last to eliminate" (p. 60). In fact, they are aware, like all the great masters, that ultimately rejection of life means the death of art.

WHY THEN the current overestimation? Having no great masters are we simply making the most of minor ones? Is our culture turning against verbal art? Mere fashion? Perhaps something of all these: but Alvarez unwittingly indicates two other reasons, seemingly more important. On p. 90 he speaks of "the problem that bedevilled Beckett, as it bedevils nearly everyone else: how do you get through life?" Possibly more people are now asking themselves some such question more often. Yet the phrase "as it *bedevils nearly everyone else*" surely indicates undue identification

[1] *Beckett*. By A. ALVAREZ. Fontana, 50p.

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with Beckett, since most people—certainly in the West—for most of the time still face no such problem. If it is typical and normal, it is so only among the sick and the stricken—and these are precisely, and falsely, the characters Beckett chooses to represent the human condition. It is *a* human condition, but not, happily, the norm; nor do normal people really think it is, though they may find it pleasant to indulge the idea: to feel tough-minded and be sentimental at the same time. The second reason, even more important, and also more profitable as a focus of examination, is the modern preoccupation with form, which goes with a feeling that it is naive and old-fashioned to discuss content—let alone make value-judgments about it. Yet what a writer says is as much part of his work as how he says it; and that is true no matter what the degree of interaction between them.

> There is a remarkable logic and inevitability about Beckett's progress. . . . (p. 37)

> Not only is death and what Coleridge called "Life-in-Death" his subject, it is also his form: all human detail is stripped away leaving only the aesthetic equivalent of "a big talking ball", an art-form bereft of everything except the basic donnée of literature, language. (p. 68)

And, to complete our first quotation:

> His unassailable reputation . . . is, I think, a tribute to his continual search for a special kind of perfection, a perfection manifest in his unfailing stylistic control and economy of language, his remorseless stripping away of superfluities. (p. 123)

There *is* something morally admirable and aesthetically pleasing about austerity and economy of form. All the same it is paradoxical, surely, to pay tribute to a form that almost perfects itself out of existence, to admire the emperor's clothes, not hypocritically in spite of their non-existence, but *because* of it.

At the vanishing-point represented by *Breath*, form and formlessness become almost undistinguishable. Now, Mr Alvarez clearly sees this, and sees too that Beckett's absurdist, existentialist "philosophy" logically and inevitably leads to silence, and therefore to a formal paring away till nothing is left, but like everyone else he refrains from drawing the obvious conclusion: that when "the death-instinct wins" you do not get great art, not even *formally* great art. And a preoccupation with form, regardless of the nature of the content, can be rightly called decadent, for it is dangerous to life as well as art.

FORM, OF COURSE, is necessary to art—and to a sane life—but today, as a corrective, it might best be regarded as a necessary evil. For all form corrodes reality; absolute form corrodes absolutely: a destination now almost reached by Beckett in his reaction against slush. But if amorphous deliquescence on the one hand is death to literary art, so on the other is snowcrystal form lacking any vital content to formalise. Mann puts this tellingly in the "Snow" chapter of *The Magic Mountain;* a chapter much concerned, symbolically, with the relations of art and life, form and content:

> Yet each in itself—this was the uncanny, the anti-organic, the life-denying character of them all—each of them was absolutely symmetrical, icily regular in form . . . the living principle shuddered at this perfect precision, found it deathly, the very marrow of death. (*The Magic Mountain*)

> Certainly I don't intend—in this heart of mine so stormily beating it doesn't appeal to me in the least—to let myself be snowed under by this idiotically symmetrical crystallometry.

> I will keep faith with death in my heart, yet will remember that faith with death and the dead is evil, is hostile to humankind, so soon as we give it power over thought and action. *For the sake of goodness and love, man shall let death have no sovereignty over his thoughts.*

Mann is not complacent ("I will keep faith with death in my heart"), any more than is Joyce, who bases *Ulysses* on "the incertitude of the Void" (just like Beckett) and sees the self-deception, the absurdity, the fundamental isolation and pointlessness of the human situation, but like Mann (and unlike Beckett) also sees the achievement, the gusto and, when all admissions are made, the worthwhileness of life, at least for the not yet aged, crippled, bedridden and impotent. And saying "yes" to life like Hans Castorp and Molly Bloom makes for big works, rich and vital in form as well as in "human clutter"; saying "No" leads to a dead-end in both. That is because Mann's and Joyce's attitude corresponds to the varied facts of life, and Beckett's, for all its air of facing up to them, does not.

As Alvarez says:

> Beckett is a genuine existentialist. . . . Perhaps this is at the root of his depression. The impotence his deprived, ruined characters sense so keenly and return to so consistently is spiritual as well as physical. (p. 56)

This is the stance of the metaphysical pessimist who assumes that all is for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds; an outlook no more valid than its Panglossian contrary, though now a good deal more in favour. Two fashionable and fallacious assumptions underlie it.

That the universe is absurd and thus at all points pointless is the first assumption. The fallacy is that though *existence as a whole* may be absurd—and very disappointing to those brought up to believe otherwise—it by no means follows that the *whole of existence* is absurd. "Absurd", indeed, is not the word, because the universe

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does not purport to be sensible. "Indifferent" would be a proper, neutral term.

The second assumption is that the universe is absurd because it acts arbitrarily, and thus unjustly, towards mankind. Anthropomorphically speaking, this is allowable; victims of accident or disease may well *feel* they live in an absurd and hostile world—but it is in truth a neutral one, and even its most violent acts are not tyrannical; rather they are the results of unalterable law. To be philosophically pessimistic on this account, to assume that the universe *is* hostile and absurd, and complain of its injustice is to confuse natural law with human law—the absurdity thus lying with the plaintiff, not the universe.

ONE OF THE MORE curious results of the Great Leap Forward in criticism has been to transfer this sort of muddle to literature and to commentaries upon it. Because it now seems that everything is not being done for us from above, it is assumed we should despair of doing anything for ourselves here below. Because the universe now seems not to have been consciously and aesthetically created, it has been assumed that works of art ought not to be either—so the formal perfection admired by Beckett fans becomes paradoxically admiration of a developing technique for matching a dwindling content by a progressive destruction of form: "the strategy of formlessness, the aesthetic equivalence of impotence" (p. 61), as Mr Alvarez acutely remarks. Nor is there any contradiction between this remark and references to his growing purity of style, inventive technique, and stripped form, the apparent gap being bridged by the logical "inevitability of his development" (p. 133). As scenes and characters gradually disintegrate:

> . . . dissolve away . . . through successive stages of immobility and claustrophobia . . . the heroes . . . become more and more disembodied and uncharacterised, losing habits, memories, even limbs . . . . (p. 46)

—as that happens, naturally the aesthetically appropriate form is one that approaches zero, the circle that is Aristotle's "perfect form" but signifies nothing.

In practice, of course, though Beckett's are anti-novels, anti-plays, and anti-short-stories—that is, anti-constructive—they cannot quite achieve nothingness, the formal perfection of formlessness, or we should have no evidence that zero is what they are moving towards: a deathly negation. It is significant, however, that his volume of collected non-short-stories is entitled *No's Knife,* his latest non-play *Not I.* The nihilism of which this urge to negation is an expression

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can, of course, be hilarious—by debunking, for instance:

> There was that strange light which follows a day of persistent rain, when the sun comes out and the sky clears too late to be of any use. The earth makes a sound as of sighs and the last drops fall from the emptied cloudless sky. A small boy, stretching out his hands and looking up at the blue sky, asked his mother how such a thing was possible. Fuck off, she said. ("The End", *No's Knife*, 1967, p. 44)

> The top, very flat, of a mountain, no, a hill, but so wild, so wild, enough. Quag, heath up to the knees, faint sheep-tracks, troughs scooped deep by the rains. It was far down in one of these I was lying, out of the wind. Glorious prospect, but for the mist that blotted out everything, valleys, plain and sea. ("Tests for Nothing", *No's Knife*, p. 71)

In *Waiting for Godot* the philosophic generality—one place, in leaf and leafless, to stand minimally for Space and Time, two pairs of characters all with different national names, to stand for Mankind—allows us to laugh at sufferings we need not pity (as these are notions rather than persons). The devices of non-sequitur, non-listening and non-action—typical of most theatre of the absurd—amusingly undermine common assumptions, allow an audience the pleasure of relaxing the daily effort of politeness, attention, and purposiveness. A similar claim can be made for *Endgame* and, a little more dubiously, for *Happy Days*. But these plays all retain some links with the theatre of *vital* form in which, as in life, the disintegrative temptation of the death-wish is held at bay. Such form controls, without killing the human energies of the content. Beckett's plays simply by getting shorter—down to half a minute—have less and less working form: a fact, of course, inseparable from their having less and less to say about less and less (till *Breath*, logically, says nothing about nothingness and is itself formally next to nothing). The characters keep pace: at first doddery and down-and-out, but mobile, next almost immobilised in dustbins, then quite immobilised in earth, and finally annihilated. It is sometimes said that their broken utterances mysteriously "add up to a life." No, they subtract down to a death, and the play's formal progress towards symbolic burial and annihilation, towards absence, perfectly parallels the contentual progress towards silence.

This inevitably follows from Beckett's basic premises (again, as Alvarez well sees). A nihilist is one for whom everything has no value and no price, so that living is seen as a matter of finding ways to pass the time (which would pass anyway) till death relieves us of the unwelcome burden of life. A view that can produce much amusement by mocking the pursuits and beliefs we normally take seriously, some of them, perhaps, genuinely more seriously than they deserve. But such an idea necessarily implies that there is no point in positive effort. The only point therefore is to point out the pointlessness of everything—and why not, then, the pointlessness of pointing? That is why the only logical end is silence and a form that disappears up its own analogical end. Equally clearly the only bearable attitude in face of such a belief—especially when decrepitude is taken as the human norm—is stoicism.

TRADITIONALLY, "stoicism" rings of nobility, whether real, as with Boethius and Socrates, or religious (putting the clock fast) as with Seneca. Beckett is different. His is an ignoble stoicism. His non-character in "The End" refers to " . . . the story I might have told, a story in the likeness of my life, I mean, without the courage to end or the strength to go on" (*No's Knife*, p. 67). This *is* the story Beckett tells, over and over, edging to a literary death as his impersonages edge to a literal one—sans action, sans character, sans plot, sans words, sans everything. Like Buddha, Beckett desiderates Nirvana, but it is for him not a spiritual progress to an abstract state; it is a physical regress to a material one. While waiting, passing the time, his derelicts are not so much *going* to ground as stoically letting the ground get them back. Being down to earth is certainly an anti-romantic virtue; carried to logical but absurd lengths it becomes a form of decadent romanticism, for it indulges a despair in excess of that warranted by the full facts, necessarily dangerous to life and art, and destructive of both form and content: "All I say cancels out, I'll have said nothing" ("The Calmative," *No's Knife*, p. 26).

Actually, Beckett is exaggerating, making the worst of things as usual. Even in his late works he says—or, anyway, implies—just a little more than nothing; and they can still be gruesomely funny, though less consistently so than *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. Minimal as they are, they still exist, at the common vanishing-point of tragedy, farce, and nihilistic comedy. It is even true that they have some value apart from that of being debunking, pessimistic correctives to over-optimistic attitudes. For Beckett's is the bitter grin of displaced pity; and this affects both content and form, neither being quite so negative as it seems. Alvarez rightly speaks of "that anguish so piercing that it must be displaced before it can be expressed", of a method "like the mechanism of dreams, where real agonies are expressed only by displacement and disguise" (p. 28). This results at its best in mithridatic tragi-comedy, enabling us to endure, if not to enjoy life. It forces us to face the plight of the badly stricken, and allows us to bear the sight, by defensive laughter. To put it in more specific,

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practical terms, Beckett indicates a way of death-in-life for the aged, the imprisoned or the bed-ridden; shows the spirit of non-resistance needed to pass the time with fewer and fewer resources, to make do with less and less, make the best of bad businesses, be thankful for ever-smaller mercies, "keep faith with death." His works are, as it were, Get Worse cards for those in hospital, in the end bed. And that is something. The question is whether it is enough—let alone the feast that would ratify his current reputation. The answer, surely, is surely not; and the reason for that answer lies precisely in the admired logic of his development, since it is a logical progression, as we have seen, from fallacious premises.

The basic flaw, the hole in your Beckett, seems to be this: for all their façade of modernism his plays are medieval in their assumption that the end of life is the whole of life, that if there is no purpose or reason beyond life there cannot be any purposes or reasons within it—false conclusions, both of them. He is, then, philosophical but not reasonable. In the long view, it may be just to see life as essentially a painful progress to the grave, disguised by self-deception and play-acting. But on nihilistic premises themselves the long view should be no more valid than short views, the essential than the contingent; and this particular long view happens not only to be false, but also to be psychologically and artistically stultifying. In fact, as we read or watch, we know that for the better part of their lives most people are not ill, poor, impotent, crippled and bored, nor even bedevilled by spiritual despair; that along with the loneliness of the human situation goes the sociability of people, along with some misery some happiness—at any rate until we become too badly stricken. This secret knowledge is what makes the gruesomeness funny and the toughmindedness sentimental.

BECKETT, IN SHORT, springs a typically symbolist trap: making a part stand for the whole, but choosing an unrepresentative part. We fall for it, if we do, because the apparently unsentimental toughness of attitude and the formally seamless, "uncluttered" world created, con us into taking his truthfulness about the part as the Whole Truth about the whole.

Paradoxical to the end, he exaggerates by *minifying* reality. The more negative he is, the more exaggerated his claim. The more unflinching his gaze the less he sees—and reveals. And, it would seem, the less he creates, the more we admire. Perhaps they were right, those admen who took for their selling-point to a gullible public not the solid mint but that perfect form of negation, the hole in the middle.

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Every Sentence Carries a Government Warning

The Notion of Correctness—By R. W. BURCHFIELD

THE SUBJECT OF CORRECTNESS in language is now tending to be lost in an irremeable labyrinth. For two hundred years or more, grammarians and lexicographers have endeavoured to settle the boundaries of acceptability in the English language, and to provide the educated public with manuals of usage which, if followed, could act as a guarantee or assurance of good taste (at least in the written form of the language), and as a protection against casual and deplorable irreptions creeping into the language. A new version of the latest work of this kind appeared recently and is the nearest equivalent to a state-sponsored linguistic directive that we have in Britain. It might have been sub-titled "Every Sentence Carries a Government Warning."

The admonitory note on a packet of (for example) Louis Rothmans *Select* and Sir Bruce Fraser's revision[1] of the late Sir Ernest Gowers' *The Complete Plain Words* have in common the desire to point out the possibly unforeseen dangers into which a person is liable to fall unawares. In *The Complete Plain Words* the warning is often very stern, as for example:

> The schoolmaster who wrote to *The Times* about the damage done to the BBC by 'Mrs Whitehouse *and her ilk* (my italics)' should write out fifty times 'I must not use words I do not understand'. (p. 38)

Let us suppose, however, that the schoolmaster chanced to consult the 1933 Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and reported that if he did not understand the word *ilk* neither did the Scottish poet J. Fisher in 1790, nor numerous other writers down to 1899, nor, presumably, the writer of the following sentence in *The Times* of 8 May 1969 (p. 8):

> This habit is confined to Tory backbenchers like... Rear-Admiral Morgan Giles and others of that ilk.

If further he consulted *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1961) he would find that two *ilks* are listed, one (a pronoun) used in the manner approved by Sir Bruce, and the other (a noun—"family, sort, kind"—often used disparagingly) left without any indication that it is a "misuse." The schoolmaster might very well be bewildered at this point and might claim that the first *ilk* is a highly specialised use known only to those familiar with the kinship terminology of Scottish clans, and that the second *ilk* has been "current" (at risk from the grammarian's cane!) for almost two hundred years. At what glacial rate, he might ask, does public opinion change? And with what authority does Sir Bruce speak? His bewilderment might be increased if he noticed that, to judge from the Bibliography of *The Complete Plain Words*, Sir Bruce depressingly appears to be consulting outmoded editions of some important works of reference—for example the 1928 (!) edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary*.

This brings us to the heart of the matter. For something like two centuries—it is convenient to regard 1755, the year of the publication of Dr Johnson's Dictionary, as the high point of conservationism in lexicography, with a slightly later date for the same stage of development in grammar—lexicographers and grammarians have gradually come to accept as axiomatic that contemporary usage is often in conflict with past patterns of usage, and that "misuses" are often no more than early warnings of an irreversible change of meaning or construction that has already occurred. Thus, for example, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* records the old hostility to the pronunciation of *balcony* with the stress on the first syllable:

> Regularly stressed *balcóny* till early 19c., as in Cowper "John Gilpin" 142, Byron "Beppo" xi (rhyming with *Giorgione*); Swift in "Tom Clinch" has *bálconies*, but Samuel Rogers (d. 1855) says: "'cóntemplate' is bad enough, but 'bálcony' makes me sick."

It is the same with the introduction of new words. How cautiously and with what concern Jeremy Bentham brought the word *international* into the language in 1780:

> The word *international*, it must be acknowledged, is a new one; though, it is hoped, sufficiently analogous and intelligible. It is calculated to express, in a more significant way, the branch of law which goes commonly under the name of the *law of nations*.

It is always necessary to bear in mind that today's linguistic nettles may turn into tomorrow's roses.

[1] H.M.S.O., £1.

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IF SIR BRUCE FRASER'S schoolmaster is not satisfied with some of the statements he finds in *The Complete Plain Words* (though of course there is so much here that is sound and sensible that he will not neglect it altogether) where can he turn for authority in linguistic matters? First and foremost there is of course *The Oxford English Dictionary*, issued in fascicles between 1884 and 1928, and now conventionally bound in twelve large volumes,[2] together with its 1933 Supplement, which itself is being replaced by a three-volume Supplement, the first volume of which (A–G) appeared in 1972. This is the only historically-based dictionary of the general English vocabulary, though there are numerous completed or partially completed period and regional dictionaries from which additional information can be obtained about (for example) Middle English, American English, Canadian English, and Scottish English. For contemporary American English, and to some extent for the current vocabulary of other branches of English, the best authority is *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1961, with later sets of Addenda). For grammar the most authoritative work available at present is that of Randolph Quirk et al., *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (Longmans, 1972), a compendious work that reveals the amazing variety and complexity of present-day English, though anyone more accustomed to the older terminology of grammar might still wish to turn to Onions, Zandvoort, and others, as well. Much useful exploratory work in grammar has been done by Noam Chomsky and other transformationalists but no descriptive grammar of the language has yet been written along transformational lines. The Chomskyan "revolution", in so far as it has affected more conventional treatments of English grammar, has led, for example, to the widespread practice of setting down seemingly parallel but unacceptable structures alongside those that are acceptable. Thus in Quirk (1972), p. 94 (the unacceptable sentences are marked with an asterisk):

GRAMMATICAL FEATURE	DYNAMIC	STATIVE
progressive	I'm learning the language	*I'm knowing the language
	I'm being careful	*I'm being tall

And on p. 617:

> The quasi-auxiliary use of a coordinated *try* appears to be limited to the simple stem. Contrast the acceptability of
> *Try and see* us tomorrow
> He will *try and see* us tomorrow
> He may *try and see* us tomorrow

[2] Or the same work in its photographically reduced form, the *Compact O.E.D.*, 2 vols., 1971.

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*They are *trying and seeing* us tomorrow
*He *tries and sees* us every day
Instead of coordination we must use the *to*-infinitive:
He *tried to see* us yesterday
He has *tried to see* us
They are *trying to see* us tomorrow
He *tries to see* us every day.

Leaving aside regional dialects and the harmless variations of personal idiolects it can be said, I think, that present-day scholars, whether of synchronic or diachronic bent, recognise four main areas of usage:

1. Uses that are accepted or at any rate are not disputed by anyone. (*John is a good boy.*)
2. Disputed or contested uses (see below).
3. Non-standard, shading into erroneous, uses (*irregardless* used for *regardless, should of* for *should have, drunk* as past tense of *drink*).
4. Invented words, nonce-words, novelties not yet established (e.g. *diplonapping* (1973) — the kidnapping of diplomats).

Movement upwards or downwards in the scale is happening, though at varying rates, all the time, and is recorded with various degrees of efficiency in dictionaries, grammars, and usage manuals. The most unhelpful guides are those based on an inadequate sampling of the language and with too much store set on the personal experience (sometimes stiflingly provincial or insular) of the compiler himself.

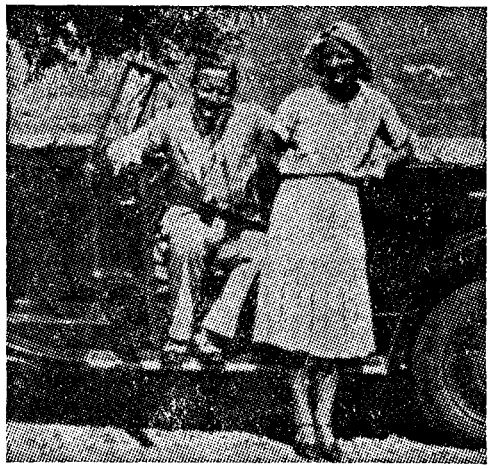
It is instructive to look a little more closely at the category of disputed or contested uses. In terms of the whole language these uses are almost insignificantly few in number but they tend to occur in the written language with considerable frequency. *Ilk* (already mentioned) is an example of a word that is moving very slowly upwards to the category of uncontested usage. Others that are tending in the same direction but in the face of strong opposition, are *hopefully* (as now commonly used, first recorded in 1932), *data* used as a singular noun (thus used repeatedly in scientific work), *disinterested* (confusingly but inevitably re-acquiring the sense "uninterested"), *interpretive* (coming back into favour again, especially in America, against *interpretative* though both are recorded before 1700), modern formations in *-ize* (though the Fifty Years War against *finalize* is now perhaps at an end), the use of the terminal element *-wise* ("expensewise it is a good bargain"), and constructions like *different to* (used, let it be noted, by Thackeray throughout *Henry Esmond*). Words like *disambiguate* and *internalize*, for long commonplace in the specialised language of Linguistics and the Social Sciences, are tending to break loose and appear in more general contexts—to be greeted with incredulity and shock by those who are sheltered from the specialised monographs of the scholars. In America the English language is being tortured and twisted into a generalised set of "phonetic" spellings in Black English publications (*'bout*=about, *dat*=that, *naw*=no, *po'*=poor, *suh*=sir, *tole*=told); and in these, many constructions are being used that are not found in more conventional publications:

> They's some things that jes' ain't natchel. (*Journal of American Folklore*, 1962, p. 325)
> Be's that way sometime. (*Black World*, June 1971, p. 12)

New analogous formations come into the language all the time: in view of the pattern *stimulate/stimulant* it was inevitable that sooner or later *infuriate* would be joined by *infuriant* (first recorded in the OED files from Mr Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1953)):

> The sight of Welch's "bag" and fishing-hat on a nearby chair, normally a certain infuriant, only made him hum his Welch tune. (ch. 8, p. 87)

WHO HAS THE LAST WORD? Certainly not Sir Bruce Fraser, though his book, regarded as a guide to some of the worst snares, is valuable as a temporary authority; nor all the guardians of



F. SCOTT & ZELDA FITZGERALD
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BODLEY HEAD

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the language who write to *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* about uses they cannot abide. The only course left for an educated man is to line his shelves with the *OED* (and one or more of its derivatives, especially the *Shorter* and the *Concise*), Webster's Third, Quirk (1972), Gowers/Fowler (1965), cherish them and learn to regard them as *Interimslexika* and *Interimsgrammatiken*, and try not to let his mind explode with fury when a new or unfamiliar use appears before him. Anyone gathering words and examining constructions at the front line knows that linguistic innovation and unacceptability are by no means synonymous. The fascination of the present day is the strength of the common core of accepted English notwithstanding the daily assault brought to bear on it by those who set down their thoughts in print.

Man of Genius

Durkheim the Pioneer—By JOHN BOWLE

"DO WE NOT FEEL the breath of empty space?," wrote Nietzsche, "has it not become colder? God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. . . ." As the implications of Darwinism sank in, there would be "wars such as have never happened on earth." Durkheim, too, had ceased to believe in God and was determined to find another moral sanction for society; but his alternative was not the *übermensch*; it was a cautious and well-grounded scientific humanism. As a great pioneer of sociology and social anthropology in all their current and pervasive ramifications, he will always have his place. Still, he is no mere historical figure; the problems he defined and the method that he propounded are still highly topical.

Dr Lukes has done a public service in this masterly book[1]; he is a formidable sociologist who comes to grips with Durkheim's many-sided thought and points out its limitations as well as its value. But unlike many sociologists, he is also a natural biographer who tellingly relates his subject's ideas to his origins, education, and career. Durkheim emerges as a sympathetic personality, if not without intellectual arrogance: deeply rooted in the Rabbinical tradition whose theology he rejected; a good friend and a model family man; a tiger for work; an eloquent if dogmatic teacher; a dedicated pioneer of an original application of scientific method to the study of societies, civilised and primitive, and in particular to the ideas that reflect and determine their ways of life. Like many of his generation in his anxiety to put a new science on the map, he over-simplified, made excessive claims, became unpractical. But his basic principle was sound, that political and social theorists ought no longer to be prophets but rather doctors, testing and promoting the health of societies, itself the result of successful adaptation to environment. He thus, in principle, thought in terms of the greatest and most urgent problem now before us —how to adapt what is becoming a world civilisation to the change in environment created by nuclear power.

Durkheim believed that even if, as an early Chinese sage affirmed, "There is No Man in Heaven Judging Sin", there is no need to strike anarchic or suicidal attitudes but a duty to make a cool and systematic appraisal of the social functions of religion. Man, in the social as well as the technological sphere, must make himself. If today Durkheim's explanations may appear too dogmatic, his method (on the statistics and observations then available) found out, organised and illuminated the facts.

He came at the right time. The crude contrast between the hard little individuals who make their "social contracts" with public power in Hobbesian or Lockean terms had long seemed artificial to subtler minds. Spinoza with his humanistic pantheism had early begun to explore the relationship more deeply; and Vico, though long neglected, had sought to understand the evolution of society through the changing consciousness of mankind. Then Rousseau and Burke, Kant, Hegel and T. H. Green had all, in their different idioms, sought a moral basis for a more organic society. Indeed the last might here have been more related to Durkheim. They had been concerned with the mysterious area in which individuals and societies interact, and had tried to draw upon an emergent will to form a sanction for government instead of the old transcendental dogmas or the new and dusty philosophy of the Utilitarians. It was to be humanist and dynamic.

[1] *Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work. A historical and critical study.* By STEVEN LUKES. Allen Lane. £6.50.

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On the sociological side, the old crude dichotomy between Individual and State had also long been questioned. Montesquieu had been the father of comparative social studies; then Saint-Simon and Comte had tried to put politics in their place in a more comprehensive view, tackled the fundamental question of how to run society without a revealed religion, and invented synthetic rituals accordingly. Then Marx, claiming to be the Darwin of the social sciences, had made his explanation and prophecies of progress in terms of dialectical materialism, again making the old legalistic concepts of individual and state seem superficial. But all these pioneers had been as dogmatic as the establishments that they had sought to transform. It was Durkheim, combining the moralising purpose of the political philosophers and the broader views of the would-be social scientists, who attempted to find out the facts about the social medium in which they had all tried to work. Like Spinoza, he set himself not to laugh at men or weep over them, but to understand them.

HOW DID HE DO THIS, and what did he find? Born the son of a Rabbi in 1858 in Epinal, of Jewish stock on both sides, he grew up in an austere and close-knit community sustained by racial and religious solidarity. When he came to write on suicide he would find that Jews, like Catholics, were less prone to it than Protestants and agnostics. But the Jewish conscience, like the Nonconformist one, exacted its price: he was unable in later life, he alleged, to experience pleasure without a sense of remorse. He retained a deep sense of public duty towards France, crippled and demoralised after the Franco-Prussian war.

He thus remained essentially a Rabbinic moralist: "thin and pale with an immense head and sombre eyes, with a subdued but hypnotic delivery, which could turn in its quiet way in a kind of incantation." In 1879 he passed into the *École Normale Supérieure*—then, as Dr Lukes writes, "the French equivalent of Jowett's Balliol" —and among his contemporaries were Jean Jaurès and Henri Bergson.

Here, in conditions of archaic squalor, austere discipline, and hot-house intellectual excitement, he lost his faith but came into his own. He was known as "The Metaphysician," precociously mature and voluble ("on the steps of the staircase and even at lunch time he would immobilise us with four forked dilemmas"). He graduated with maximum honours.

While teaching philosophy in Parisian *Lycées*, a duty which drove one of his closest friends to suicide, he was drawn from strictly classical and literary studies to the history of institutions, as described in Fustel de Coulange's *La Cité Antique* where the classical gods are depicted as nothing but the beliefs of men. Dr Lukes is particularly illuminating on Durkheim's intellectual pedigree, on his reaction to Comte and on his debt to the neo-Kantian Renouvier. Already he apprehended social development not as linear in the 19th-century way, but as branching out like a tree.

In 1887 came Durkheim's chance. Appointed *Chargé de Cours* at Bordeaux, he flung himself into his work, married a Jewish woman who "removed from his household all material cares and all frivolity", and settled down "*trés comme il faut.*" He was later, unlike many other anti-clerical social democrats, to object to easy divorce, since marriage was very useful in preventing people from "running after pleasures" that were "both unattractive and disappointing." He would write of the "moral tranquillity which is the husband's strength." He was in fact always deeply bourgeois, a man of regulation, method, and routine. But this did not prevent him from being long kept out of a position in Paris.

It was an immense task that he now set himself: "to find rational substitutes for religious notions", to contain the "latent anarchy of insatiable desires", to assuage the "excesses of vanity" and individualism, and to create a new humanist orthodoxy to be taught in the secular state schools.

Writing his lectures caused him "much suffering", but his classes enjoyed them. In his quiet way he was hypnotic. He first investigated that *conscience collective*, an all-pervading way of life which through the generations banked up into *représentations collectives*, ideas that conditioned all development and that varied in time and place. He wanted to find out if these *représentations*, which were "social facts" in their own right, followed their own laws. In medieval terms, he tended to be a realist rather than a nominalist —hardly a fashionable attitude in his time.

During the 1890s at Bordeaux, an exponent of a relatively new science which became more respectable as it formulated its own laws, he wrote on the *Division of Labour*; on the *Rules of Sociological Method*, on *Suicide*, and on *Socialism*. He was not, he said, interested merely in *la cuisine politique;* he wanted to find the social facts by methods suited to both advanced and primitive societies.

He was not interested in "metaphysical positivism", but in analysing mentality and pattern; not in direct linear explanations in time, but in what was going on in all the ramified variety of changing societies. More sophisticated than most 19th-century investigators, he understood that

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since the sociologist himself is conditioned by his own context he must try to discount the resulting bias. He thus made Herbert Spencer look the provincial he was. For the sociologist and the social anthropologist, he insisted, must accept the relativity of standards; what makes for health and survival in one time and place can be lethal in others. What a salutary contrast to the all-pervasive dogmatism of the prophets of Total Explanation, transcendental or pseudo-scientific!

THE METHOD PRODUCED a rich harvest—described with admirable lucidity by Dr Lukes. First, Durkheim on the family in its varying contexts. It had originated, he thought, in clan kinship, symbolised by a totem, and developed through elaborate patriarchal patterns into the intimate and intensely personal relationship of modern times—at its best a refuge, the *foyer* of kindness, the school of duty, love and work. But its influence was on the wane—nor did Durkheim do much to enhance it by deprecating the inheritance of property. The substitute, he argued hopefully, should be closer professional ties and commitments, thus taking an optimistic view, for example, of academic, commercial or journalistic life. In principle, he advocated free groupings that are creative, unaggressive and undemanding on material resources—a prospect enhanced if modern technology increasingly confines material production to experts and machinery.

Durkheim's study of *Suicide* naturally had the widest appeal. He thought that its prevalence reflected a general *malaise* of European societies and gave the clearest picture of the dissolution of social bonds. It was most often due to isolation in great industrial cities, where "the cold wind of egotism freezes [men's] hearts and weakens their spirits"; driven into the blind alley of individualism,[2] highly educated people despaired. But there are also suicides of Altruism, of honour, as among the Japanese, or as a quick way to heaven, as among religious enthusiasts. *Anomie*, economic and social breakdown and disorder, is another cause. When people become *déclassé*, either upwards, when they become insatiable and "do not know when to stop", or downwards, when fatalism may set in. Chronic social *Anomie* produces apathy and disgust with life: oddly, on his data, he found that more people killed themselves in the daytime than at night, and far fewer women did so than men. A great war, of course, creates more social solidarity; and the number of suicides, if not the

[2] Vividly described in that neglected but remarkable work, Gerald Heard's *The Social Substance of Religion.*

Andrey Sinyavsky
(Abram Terz)

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casualty rate, goes down. Durkheim on suicide is thus still topical. He had raised the question of how to arrange society to make it better fit to live in and, by implication, how to take the steam out of political dogmas that often produce breakdown. In this field there is much more to be done.

The Rules of Sociological Method, as Dr Lukes emphasises, was a manifesto. It was the most controversial of all his writings, concerned with finding a social *morale* derived from the *conscience collective* and the *représentations collectives* to which it gives rise. These representations here appear at their most autonomous—not at all, as the Marxists were insisting, the peripheral result of an economic process. The sociologist must analyse and compare these collective ideals on which the vitality and variety of intellectual and moral life depends; they are a social phenomenon, "a collective psychology", which cannot be deduced directly from individual psychology but only from a group of individual *consciences.* Durkheim had made the immense claim that "ideas" rather than material causes were the most decisive in social evolution, and that it was vital to concentrate upon understanding them and how they worked.

INVITED AT LAST, in 1902, to lecture at the Sorbonne and by 1904 a professor there, Durkheim now became more identified with the anti-clerical but moderate socialism of Jaurès and he could not avoid the vitriolic politics of the capital. He encountered bitter enemies, from the right-wing Catholics through the Bergsonians to the Syndicalist George Sorel. He became more of a pundit, more of a preacher, more an academic politician, not without guile and "cultural imperialism." A critic depicted his domineering side, "the gravity of his face like that of a death's head on which a macabre fantasy had adjusted a professor's spectacles and spread a fluffy beard" and added an inexorable "ice cold" eloquence. He demanded followers and disciples. And still for them his *Les Formes Élementaires de la Vie Réligieuse* (1912), brought revelation. As one wrote,

> Until Durkheim . . . the religious were an embarrassment to science and scientists . . . the fact of the religious mind existed—primordial and irreducible. . . . It was an open door to all insanities and obscurantisms, and it was this that allowed the Jameses and Bergsons of two continents to scorn rationalism. The irreducibles had to be reduced, the primordial subordinated. Then came Durkheim, and this soon happened . . . the religious, he said, is quite simply the social. And whoosh! the ground was cleared.

To the right-wing Catholics he was a menace, to the Marxists a dangerous critic of their dogma; but he was well in with powerful politicians, and he went his own way.

The First World War hit Durkheim hard: in misery after his son's death in the Salonika campaign in 1916, he suffered a stroke, and in the following year he died, aged fifty-nine. But he had fulfilled his life's purpose—"to open a new way for the Science of Man."

That science, now much less dogmatic and more sophisticated, is apposite today. Whether they regard Nietzsche's views about God as conclusive or as an irrelevant blasphemy, most responsible people are now pragmatists, and it is urgent to understand and deflate the monstrous ideologies that even now inspire hatreds that threaten total destruction.

For the ideas, which on Durkheim's analysis, have banked up into *représentations collectives* are by no means always accumulated good will, but often accumulated evil which debases those who are conditioned by it. With the threatened eclipse, even in the liberal social democracies, of the élites of whom Durkheim was an example, the variety of outlook and spontaneous professional collaboration he advocated could well be swamped by a centralised, bureaucratic, egalitarian and coarsening drive.

But if the liberties that allowed Durkheim and his kind to flourish can be preserved, his scientific humanistic method could enable responsible minorities to find out what is going on, and to promote spontaneous occupational groups with common interests that cut across the alienations of class hatred and get beyond the borders of competition for a philistine suburbia of petty-bourgeois affluence. And if it be indeed necessary to accept that there is "No Man in Heaven Judging Sin", the Chinese have managed to carry on the most lasting and massive civilisation on earth for millennia without Him.

Durkheim's claims for his science had the relative crudity and exaggeration of a pioneer. But his aims were limited and wise: to promote social equilibrium and contentment—"that pleasure in existing and living which characterises health to societies as well as individuals." And this balance derives from an "adaptation to environment" in all its variety, natural and man made. Durkheim's method and objective, for all the deficiencies which Dr Lukes ably points out, is in principle sound, and could give theoretical backing for the pragmatism to which the facts of global political, social, and economic life are forcing upon the rulers and the peoples of the world.

Dr Lukes' fine book, with its thorough and lucid exposition, admirable design, comprehensive bibliographies and incisive style, will bring the ideas of a man of genius to a wider public.

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World Enough, and Time

New Fiction—By CLIVE JORDAN

NOVELS, TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY, are all right. You can get them in your sights and pick them off one by one. What worries me is that quite different collective monster, the Novel. Every novel that appears should, under examination, make clearer the nature of the whole massive, tentacular growth. What it actually does is to show a structure constantly changing and re-arranging itself, as far from being a containable entity as the inchoate, invisible mass that destroyed Hugh Morgan in Ambrose Bierce's classic—and aptly-named—horror story, "The Damned Thing."

Nevertheless the group of novels under review does suggest that the "Damned Thing" has certain common elements, functions and perhaps concerns. Several are preoccupied with sickness and psychosis. Thomas Pynchon's phantasmagoric new novel *Gravity's Rainbow* pivots on the principal character's peculiar pattern of sexual arousal, an oddity which makes him the subject of intense scientific scrutiny, and a victim of the paranoia which permeates the book. The shorter of Francis King's two stories in *Flights* is also about persecution, real or imagined, and the longer depends for its resolution on unexplained madness. William Trevor's women in *Elizabeth Alone* are all in hospital, awaiting hysterectomy or birth. Out of Dan Jacobson's pair of protagonists, one is *The Wonder Worker* of the title, gifted with the unnatural ability to change into any object at will, while the other—who is almost certainly one and the same—is under treatment in a Swiss sanatorium. Dennis Potter's similarly dualistic *Hide and Seek* opens with his character Daniel Miller being quizzed by a doctor about his obsessive dislike of the Author, who has created him and constitutes the book's other, equally paranoid, main figure.

Along with all these abnormalities goes a tendency for the novelists to withdraw from the shared, public experiences common to classic bourgeois literature, into an exploration of the writer's own sensibility and preoccupations, which once would have been considered the proper function, not of novels but of poetry. In *The Axe*, by the Czechoslovak Ludvik Vaculik, the introverted nature of the narrative no doubt reflects the oppressive political realities of the author's situation. Dan Jacobson's oblique approach is not dissimilar to Vaculik's, whose father and son narrating by turns recall Jacobson's dual protagonists. Dennis Potter's structure, plummeting between the Author and his character, with less justification makes equal demands upon the reader. Such introspection is all well and good, but only provided the exploration of the artist's ego supports and sustains the fiction. A lesson can be learnt, I believe, in narrative and in fruitful suppression of the self, from that miraculous Danish Scheherezade Isak Dinesen, who declared: "I am a story teller and nothing but a story teller. It is the story itself that interests me, and the way of telling it."

Respect for the fiction implies a respect also for the characters who dwell in it. Novelists' attitudes to character could be plotted along a graph ranging from innocence to indifference, "innocence" meaning not so much ignorance as a total compassionate complicity in the human condition. Many of the ironic structures of modern novels have the effect of denying sympathy to their characters. It must be for consideration whether even as all-encompassing a work as *Gravity's Rainbow* can be anything but a flawed achievement without human sympathy. Innocence, once lost or absent, is irretrievable; no widowsweed or brideshead can be turned again into a maidenhead. The demands of a comic novel, such as *The Rachel Papers* by Martin Amis, are different, often depending on maintaining a distance between the reader and the butt of the joke: too much sympathy means no laughter. But so does too little: we laugh, surely, because we identify with the character in a comic situation, without for a moment believing or caring what the consequences may be.

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YET WHAT SEEMS TO ME to emerge from these novels is not so much their innocence or irony, their public themes or private obsessions, but a quality which reaffirms the relevance of literary narrative as a whole—the ability of the Novel to act as a kind of Time Machine of the imagination. It's a way of travelling, first in time and space, to other periods and places or to worlds which are simply non-mimetic, not like this one at all; and, second and more important, into the inner space of other individual personalities. This is the gift, not just of the Novel, but of language, in which a limitless journey through mind and matter can be compressed into one metaphor or extended into the seven sections of an *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*. And unlike more earthbound media of communication, requiring instruments and receivers, cameras and reproducing equipment to produce finite results, in all the infinite journeys of the Word the reader is his own tele-receiver, reassembling life out of dormant lines of type.

The conquest of time after the dominance of external realism may be one of the major achievements of modern fiction, yet technology has run parallel with its own Time Machine: the aeroplane, bridging cultures as easily as seas, reducing time zones to the lines on the map as which they began. And for a decade now the space ship has opened up even vaster possibilities. Sometimes one kind of Time Traveller has bought a ticket on the other kind of machine. Seventeen years before the Wright Brothers mastered controlled flight, the rational H. G. Wells made his original Time Traveller sit on a science-based contraption with a starting handle: "parts were of metal, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal." Before Tarzan's first ferocious cry launched the Leakey Man of primeval Africa into the lending libraries, Edgar Rice Burroughs had already, in his first published book, put "a princess on Mars." Yet in 1912 he still chose to maroon Tarzan's parents Lord and Lady Greystoke in Africa by ship. Thirty years later, the lesson learnt, Tarzan's "Foreign Legion" of World War Two American soldiers crash-land into Japanese-held Indonesia from a Flying Fortress.

Perhaps aeroplanes can be time machines for the novelist in another way also: for the duration of flight, normal time seems to hang suspended and the mind awaits revelation or change. In how many popular novels has self-knowledge or true love come effortlessly in mid air? Nevil Shute Norway the aeronautical engineer knew very well what made the Time Machine work, but in *No Highway* Nevil Shute the novelist worked the machine to make play with the emotions. In Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* the Time Machine, as in countless more mundane sf sagas, is again a spaceship, a flying saucer from the planet of Tralfamadore. What the transported Billy Pilgrim learns from the Tralfamadorians is, in effect, not just a quietistic philosophy but also the dispensability of the aeroplane-spaceship for the novelist: "All moments, past, present and future, always have existed, always will exist. The Tralfamadorians can look at all the different moments just the way we can look at a stretch of the Rocky Mountains. . . ." Vonnegut treats the story of Billy Pilgrim like that, switching in time at will, with or without a flying saucer. Other worlds can be all about us at any moment, beneath our feet or in the nearest hillside, as the makers of Greek myths and mediaeval romances knew only too well. The signals from Tralfamadore are a metaphor for the reclaimed narrative freedom of the novelist, a freedom staked out most clearly by the Time Traveller in Trieste, James Joyce.

ALTHOUGH Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*[1] could stand as a monument to literary freedom, its message is one of annihilation and alienation, of mankind subjected by his own technology and becoming indistinguishable from it. Pynchon's manipulation of the Time Machine is nothing if not dexterous. In the company of the Allies, and occasionally with their enemies, the novel careers through World War Two Europe, with excursions to South West Africa and Soviet Central Asia: all occupied areas, all on the outer fringes of civilisation or given over to barbarism, summed up in the as-yet lawless post-war European continent Pynchon calls "the Zone." It's a contemporary equivalent, perhaps, of another vision out of occupied Europe, the limbo of derelict buildings through which Jean Cocteau's Orphée struggled towards Euridice in the hands of Death. Pynchon's version is, predictably, cleverer, coarser and more cruel, relieved by passages of wild comedy. Seasoned Time Travellers are not bounded by geographical constraints, and Pynchon uses all the freedom of post-Joycean fiction to pack his narrative with an extraordinary range of allusion, comment and metaphor, taking the reader on a fresh journey with virtually every paragraph. So all-embracing is the scale of reference that a statistician's grid over a map of wartime London can be compared, creatively, to the use of a sieve by ancient Roman soothsayers. I imagine Pynchon as a more orderly equivalent of the

[1] *Gravity's Rainbow*. By THOMAS PYNCHON. Cape, £3.95, paper £1.95.

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diarist Aubrey, a donnish jackdaw converting every scrap of information or fragment of jargon into binary code and feeding it into some vast back-garden data-bank. With his apparent grasp of all kinds of sociological detail he would seem to be Renaissance man returned to span the disciplines of a bewilderingly complex society, from pop music to the habits of the sexual underworld, from Pavlovian behaviourism to theories of rocket propulsion.

The Rocket, the V2 which Nazi scientists rained on London, is indeed the dominant symbol of the book, the focus for many fantasies, sado-masochistic and scientific, and the excuse for much of the time-travelling as its secrets are sought by the allies and protected by the enemy. Another central thread is the character—and mutations (he ends up as the comic-book hero Rocketman)—of the American Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop. Between his frequent bouts of sexual arousal and the pattern of the V2s dropping on London, Pavlovian stimuli in his youth have created an uncanny correspondence. All the characters inhabit what the author at one point calls "The City Paranoia", haunted by the plots and counter plots which "They" have organised, dominated by the conspiracy theory, and the structure of the book is riddled with half-seen networks running in all directions. The recent revelations of Watergate, I.T.T. and "Watergaffe" give it extraordinary topicality. One key to the maze is that despite the power of Pynchon's logic, the time-travelling goes beyond science. The first section is called "Beyond the Zero", referring to the attempt to deprogramme the conditioned infant Slothrop back to zero. Can the extinction of the reflex continue, the author wonders, beyond the Zero, beyond what is scientifically ascertainable? *Gravity's Rainbow* goes frequently beyond the Zero, into the pseudo-scientific territories of telepathy, astrology, witchcraft and the occult. What Frances Yates is to history Pynchon is to the Novel, glimpsing the Kabbala behind the computer. *Gravity's Rainbow* is not just the parabola of the Rocket's flight, but also a vision joining earth and heaven.

THROUGH THE COUNTLESS DIGRESSIONS and different styles, a gusty enthusiasm keeps the hard-hit narrative buoyant, and Pynchon has a master's command of elegiac prose. But if, despite everything, the fiction stands up, it is decidedly short on sympathy for the characters it manipulates. For the most part they do things to each other, with cruel obscenity or comic exuberance, rather than make love. Slothrop himself, ultimate indignity for a character,

Pergamon

BACKBENCH OPINION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS 1945–55

Hugh Berrington

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Nevil Johnson

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disintegrates completely. Pynchon does wonder in passing if "there is such a thing as the kindness-reflex that now and then, also beyond the Zero, survives extinction", but he's far from convinced. In the end the Rocket falls—on the Orpheus movie theatre in Los Angeles. The paranoid pattern making must be catching: I can't help remembering that the farewell ceremony in another epic of destruction, the American effort in Viet Nam, took place in a disused Saigon picture palace.

"THE INFECTION" is one way Pynchon describes the War, and it's also the title of one of Francis King's stories in *Flights*,[2] the other, naturally, being "The Cure." Francis King's people too are Time Travellers, as the overall title suggests, but in a more literal manner. Yet the eye specialist Professor Gascoigne, on a goodwill visit to Hungary, and the divorcée Irene Jacob, waiting with her daughter in Athens for the letter and the love which will not come, have both experienced the liberation of flight. "Abroad" is an escape, both are not quite themselves.

These stories, as Pynchon's icy opera is not, are small histories of human feeling, sentimental journeys with the modern kind of landmarks—Irene Jacob's divorce, the hysterectomy of Gascoigne's wife. Francis King tells them superbly, creating isolated moments which seem to arise direct from the contradictions of life, not the novelist's art. Yet he does share Pynchon's eye and ear for paranoia. In Hungary, Gascoigne's flirtations with his elegant middle-aged guide and a young English schoolteacher are tainted by fears of hidden watchers, hints of a plot he can't understand. The aeroplane he finally boards, doubts still unresolved, is an instantaneous cure. There are identified watchers again in the Athens café where Irene goes with her expressionless Japanese lover. She is cured of her infatuation, also by a flight, which actually does not take place. Like a skilled editor of film or magnetic tape, Francis King gains his effects considerably from what he chooses to leave unsaid.

SYMPATHY for everyday people, the unremarkable individuals whom Pynchon calls "the Preterite", has always been William Trevor's strength. In *Elizabeth Alone*,[3] God, significantly, is not the omnipotent Author of Dennis Potter's novel, but the surgeon who operates on four women in a London hospital, where each faces a crisis unconnected to their condition. The "unnatural compassion" of an ugly religious spinster jolts back into responsibility the central character Elizabeth, another fortyish divorcée like Irene Jacob, when she is numbed by the drunken death of her childhood friend Henry. The author's attitude to his characters, especially to poor, muddled, ruined Henry, is equally compassionate.

The very familiarity of characters and setting conceals the extent to which, in entering imaginatively into these lives, the author has had to become a Time Traveller, breathing the atmospheres of disparate London households, the hospital purlieus and the Hammersmith public houses where his glib crooked Irishmen unravel the skeins of their entrancing lies. Sometimes these external journeys tend to be over mechanical, especially in the details derived too easily perhaps from newspapers and television. The most significant journeys are into the minds and hearts of the characters, back into their marriages, their love affairs and their childhoods. Francis King and William Trevor may seem muted and traditional, examples of that elegant, self-effacing "*style anglais*" discernible in many activities from ballet to cricket. But taken on their terms, without reference to the more exotic possibilities of the novel, they are admirable examples of an author's respect for his fiction.

MOST OF THE SYMPATHY in Martin Amis's very funny first novel *The Rachel Papers*[4] is reserved for his randy, scheming narrator, a privileged middle-class youth loose in London, just coming up to his 20th birthday, and almost getting trapped on the way by true love and a possibly pregnant girl-friend. Certainly the novel is obsessive: the only aim of young Charles Highway—*there's* a name for a Time Traveller—is to get the nubile if faceless Rachel into bed as quickly and often as possible. The obsession, however, seems merely indicative of ribald good health; sickness is limited to adolescent pimples, hangovers and a mild sexual disease. Martin Amis directs a determined, deadpan stare at his chosen patch of the lush teenage jungle, teeming with characters who are about as appealing as bacilli on a face flannel, described with the detached, excessively detailed physicality common to satirists down the ages. What holds the attention are not these limited characters, but the author's verbally inventive scrutiny of them; any time-travelling in this narrow environment can only be in the language itself.

[2] *Flights*. By FRANCIS KING. Hutchinson, £2.40.
[3] *Elizabeth Alone*. By WILLIAM TREVOR. Bodley Head, £2.50.
[4] *The Rachel Papers*. By MARTIN AMIS. Cape, £2.25.

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NARRATIVE FREEDOM isn't always an unmixed blessing, as three more novels show. The playwright and polemicist Dennis Potter's first novel *Hide and Seek*[5] is unfortunately just that, a confusing paranoid game played between the Author and his main character, complete with alternative endings and gobbets of literary quotations. Somewhere in it all are fragments of true narrative, glimpses of a rural childhood in the Forest of Dean swamped by the urban experience of lonely coffee-bars and isolated rooms. Marital problems gradually emerge into importance, and the Author who finally takes over is full of a puritan self-disgust partly provoked by that weary old standby of introspective fiction, the sinful encounter with a prostitute. Through the self-questioning stridency comes the feeling of a novel behind the novel, aching to be written if only Dennis Potter would let it—of an innocent childhood which is indescribable for a novelist corrupted by cities. In this form, though, this is the Novel as therapy, for the writer rather than the reader.

IN *THE AXE*[6] Ludvik Vaculik begins by tackling with similar indirectness the depiction of a peasant childhood, fields and forests evoked with the cosy charm of a Vienna Secession woodcut. Only halfway through does it emerge that the narrator has been addressing his remarks to a gathering of journalists. Thereafter the novel is increasingly sabotaged by the complexities of its structure. Perhaps it is a measure of the totalitarian pressures on the novelist that the present-day activities of his journalist hero are only obliquely suggested, while the picture of childhood stands out in pleasing clarity. The appeal of time-travelling into the happy past is understandable in these circumstances. However, the novel ends with the journalist and his brother exhilarated by the theft of some timber, a cheering example of that passive resistance to authority well known through Milos Forman films and the Good Soldier Schweik, which seems so deeply rooted in Czechoslovak attitudes.

THE MOST ASSURED of these three novels using a deliberately fragmented narrative is Dan Jacobson's *The Wonder Worker*.[7] Having been comically conceived and delivered, Timothy Fogel is allowed to remain partially a concept, the vehicle for a parable about the Novelist as creative artist, whose freedom, for which Joyce worked, is still a point of discussion today. In this ironic structure the novelist creating Timothy Fogel becomes a mental patient, his writing dismissed as "graphomania." It adds up to a kind of commentary on the Novel, a mental block to be flushed out of the author's imagination, rather than a novel in its own right. Underlining that this is a work of theory, in the closing paragraph the patient goes Time Travelling: "I know what I'm doing. Writing down descriptions of places I have never visited, people I have never met, deeds I have never done. I am a free man."

Must freedom and sickness go together in the Novel, writing become graphomania, structure the obsessive dot-joining of paranoia, the private exploration destroy the public novel? Or will the cloudier shades of *Gravity's Rainbow* one day seem as clear and universal as the struggle between good and evil in Tolkien's hobbit world? That's the rub (and the reward) with the Damned Thing: you can never get a straight answer out of it.

[5] *Hide And Seek*. By DENNIS POTTER. Cape, £2.25.
[6] *The Axe*. By LUDVIK VACULIK. Translated by MARIAN SLING. André Deutsch, £2.50.
[7] *The Wonder Worker*. By DAN JACOBSON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.25.

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The Long and the Short and the...

Poetry Chronicle—By DOUGLAS DUNN

FOR ABOUT A DECADE, Michael Fried has possessed a diminutive general reputation, while among the poets associated with *The Review* he has been esteemed and influential. In his Fantasy Press pamphlet *Other Hands* (1962), I admired "We Lie Here." It is a harsh, colloquial and brutally frank poem about Jewishness, written in the inappropriate form of a villanelle. It began,

We lie here in the dark breeding more Jews
For the smashed ovens rebuilding in our blood.
If it's a girl I hope she has your nose.

In his *Review* pamphlet *Appetites*, I admired "The Bite"—

Grow your hair long to hide this:
If we are ever picked up and our heads shaved
I will know you by your neck.

Simply the best short poem I know.

Neither of these two poems is reprinted in *Powers*.[1] "The dramatic naturalism of his early work," says Ian Hamilton in his blurbic introduction, has been surrendered "in service of a more mysterious, almost visionary, kind of insight." This development is easy to follow in *Powers*—a number of the poems are revisions, "Miscarriage" for example, which has been reduced from fifteen lines to five, the last five of the original poem.

Fried's poetic suggests that a good deal of poetry is description, scene-setting, or loose matter that might be what the poet writes to himself in order to discover the poetic truth in his subject. Or, in more practical terms, a slow delivery of the last few strong lines that the poet's faith in himself claims are worth waiting for. The implications of Fried's practice might be both arrogant and rewarding—that is, if what the poems suggest is to be generalised. Short poems, however, have coexisted with long poems for centuries, although the extent to which the short poems of Hamilton, Falck and Fried have been subjected to dismissal on grounds of size alone is an unendearing aspect of contemporary literary response.

Fried's short poems are closer to the French ideal of *le poème bref* than the scale of the Imagists, and closer to the idea of a contemporary poem in English than that lapsed fad of a few years ago, *haiku*. Nor is Fried's brevity proof of limited vision or an ungenerous estimate of life and language. Transcendence is frequently so extreme that it represents a firm compliment to the world:

Falling asleep watching you fall asleep . . .
Burning between the burning edges of dead clouds
—Eternal garden where angels wander among leafy wounds!—

By insisting on a form which lays imagination bare, Fried evolves a narrative that imitates the movement of imagination itself. There is often an impression in these poems of making reality stop, of rescuing situations from the time that destroys them:

Like the nameless white flowers
Your warm breath creates out of nothing
But insane anguish,
They can be cut but not held.

Fried's poems are like that.

What the poets associated with *The Review* share is a literary strictness, a coincidence of wanting to be conscious of a poetic, a deliberately formed and critical idea of what contemporary poems ought to be like, which can continue to be contrasted with the intuition of poems themselves.

Technique can be elevated too highly in a poet's mind. It can sometimes appear that a poem is attempting to make experience aspire to the condition of language. An intrusive "poetical" voice can enter the poem like an interior decorator and in the guise of poetry itself—for instance, in David Harsent's[2] "Two Postscripts for my Father":

And all the time
love beat like some mad bird against
the bars beneath your skull.

This is colourful and dramatic, but a tenuous image that no longer appears to me to be in the language of when, where, and to whom I live.

BOTH DAVID HARSENT and Colin Falck[3] show a reluctance to reform language, while Falck seldom takes the imaginative risks that

[1] *Powers*. By MICHAEL FRIED. The Review, £1.
[2] *After Dark*. By DAVID HARSENT. Oxford University Press, 90p.
[3] *Backwards into the Smoke*. By COLIN FALCK. Carcanet Press, £1.75, paper 90p.

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distinguish Fried's best poems. To some extent—and this, I admit, is *my* obsession—there is a level of confusion or uninterest in their work about the nature of society and the importance of involving that in their poems. There is too much distance between an assured knowledge of what poems should be like and what society *is*. Their poems inhabit a curiously apolitical world.

Encouraged by the nature of the most impressive recent poetry, the personal life sits squat on their pages as what they cannot avoid writing about. The guaranteed truth of a clear perspective on the self and its immediate neighbours and experiences may well have won over too many poets. To a large extent, following the literary development of the times, that is inevitable. Lowell, Plath, Berryman, and to a lesser extent Larkin, have made it so. In Fried and Harsent in particular, though less decisively in Harsent's case, some attempt has been made to counter this. Personal life is seen in Fried's poems as immediate, but the movement of his imagination is to connect it as quickly as possible with "incommunicable sensations."

Some would say that it is these "incommunicable sensations" a poet tries to make himself aware of, and that though they can be conveyed to others as feeling, it is the human inexactitude in attempting to make such sensations communicable that gives a poem its beauty and mystery. Most contemporary poetries admit that the nature of ordinary life contains such sensations, and that mystical structures of feeling are socially negative. Michael Fried is not a mystical poet in that sense. His poems connect the real with the imagined, while Colin Falck writes for the most part of ordinary situations from which the act of poetry elicits a human strangeness, as in "New Girl":

Her hair
Falls lovingly over her typewriter
And her fingers master the keyboard
Like a child's at piano practice.

She is young and serious,
And she is patient with me
When I start to answer the wrong telephone
And keep finding things for her to type.

POETS ARE PROBABLY RIGHT to suspect the transformative ability of a poetry that courts images too actively, or falls into rhythms too distant from common speech—in a personal poetry, exaggerated feelings are often the result. Yet Falck does appear to have gone too far in the other direction, even to the extent of withholding a metaphor by the sort of simile he employs far too often. There is also the problem of deciding to what extent both Fried and Falck "aestheticise" experience (in the bad sense)—a distinct tendency in miniaturist poems that contain the small perception writ small, instead of the effective large perception or drama writ small. Short poems allow the possibility of perfection—a practical stratagem, perhaps, simply because there are fewer words to handle. Fried does this, as I hope I've shown, while Falck can isolate the large in a few lines—for example, of dancing:

This is the last art.
Beyond empires and metaphysics
It is this
That all things return to.

Taking photographs of the sky with a Brownie—but, in the scale of planetary wisdom and ignorance, so is most poetry.

AN EQUAL VALUE placed on the real and the imagined is also to be found in David Harsent's poems. In *Truce*,[4] he can observe

Her cigarette,
dabbed against the fire's filament,
browns along its length,

and in the same poem sequence "observe" with the imagination

Blind souls of the dead
glimmer in the shuttered room,

or "perceive" the lyrical-geographical—

The kitchen water
comes straight from the Arctic ice,

all of which are just as mysterious to Harsent as the domestic but lyrical realism of

The twilit stillness of deserted hallways.

An uncertainty at the nature of reality is close to the centre of all lyricism, and it is the achievement of a contemporary lyricism that Harsent is after in common with the other poets associated with *The Review*. It is essentially a poetry of love that is wanted. Ian Robinson, in his *Survival of English*, could have discussed these poets to much better effect than the abject garbage he provided in his dispiriting chapter on "the language of love." For it is a language of passions *The Review* poets are concerned with—Hamilton, Harsent and Falck in particular. Harsent's poems, with a subdued elegance that places an acute bitterness in shadow, express disenchantment at affairs ending, at life too still for the writer's liking, love losing or lost or won, a stillness that disguises tension, and the "promise of another world" in which passion is honed to brilliance and senses made so unencumbered that the "they" of "Acid Landscapes", for example,

[4] *Truce*. By DAVID HARSENT. Sycamore Press (4 Benson Place, Oxford), 60p.

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might lie awake by those blunt hills,
breathing each other's breath
and feeling the island slipping with the tides.

Iambic measures frequently take up the rhythm of Harsent's poems. His writing is not so much *vers libre* as *vers libéré*, while in Falck's poems, as in Fried's, the poetic impulse barely has anything at all to do with metre or cadence. They employ a deliberate but unmeasured choice of words. Short poems suppress rhythm as they do narrative, and an overt concern with rhythm as a virtue of poems produces more words and more material than a poem concerned with precise intensities can survive. If one of the purposes of prosodic writing is to help sustain language over some length, then it is obviously one of the first things to be sacrificed by short poems. One essential difficulty with short poems is therefore to ensure *some* rhythmic interest. Ian Hamilton achieves this in such lines as

O world leave this alone
At least
This shocked and slightly aromatic fall of leaves,

which in their unobtrusively iambic cadences and assonance show what can be done. Neither Fried nor Falck has this musical quality. In fact, Fried appears heavily influenced by the kind of writing favoured by Robert Bly's magazine *The Sixties*. The connection can be seen in "Depths":

Suddenly there is nothing that is not revealed by
faces alone.
America, like a hounded shark, not knowing where
to turn,
Makes for the depths,
Taking us down,

Fried is an American and so this similarity is neither exotic nor inexplicable, although in this poem three near-rhymes do convincingly help its movement. It also brings his writing in contact with the Spanish and Latin American poets Neruda, Vallejo and Machado whom *The Sixties* championed and translated.

But where poets such as Robert Bly, James Wright and Louis Simpson are prolific and concerned with a properly critical and enlarged social vision, Fried and Falck produce precious little in terms either of quantity or social insight. The scarcity of their work alarms me. Harsent is much more plentiful. *After Dark* is his second book and a marvellous advance on his first, while *Truce* is better still. An important lyrical talent is obviously beginning to grow in his work, at present denied its fullness only by occasional heavy imagery and a reluctance to allow his poems to examine a social identity. Above all, he appears less inclined to be hung up on the inhibiting notion of "authenticity" which has accompanied *The Review*'s poetic, in which respect he is like Hugo Williams—I mean the "authenticity" of having chosen the right tradition, of having formed the correct critical perspective on the poetry of the immediate past. "If you cannot forget your first love," someone once said, "you will not even recognise your last." "Authenticity", in the critical-literary-historical sense, the sort of perspective Donald Davie was at pains to reveal in *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry*, does, I think, stifle the contemporaneity it is meant to encourage.

LANGUAGE, its plasticity and brio, is implied by Edwin Morgan's practice as a quality of life, and not merely an intermediary between the impulses of creativity and audience. Few poets would quarrel with that suggestion; but it can be taken too far, and Morgan, like Fried and the others, and like Alasdair Maclean, comes a shade too close to *l'art pour l'art* for comfort.

Although a poem is
undoubtedly a "game"
it is not a game

says Morgan in one of his wittiest poems, knowing poetry as psychological and verbal extravagance as well as an aspect of human seriousness.

Morgan is prolific. Unlike the poets discussed earlier, his temperament seems to forbid him to polish only a few inches of essential ivory—he has cupboards full of tusks. His recent work, for example, includes *The Whittrick*,[5] in which the creature of the title (a weasel) represents truth and imagination; but the poem is far from a dull philosophical dramatisation. Its dialogues imitate the style of characters—*e.g.*, Joyce, MacDiarmid, Marilyn Monroe—amusingly, and much of Morgan's work has a dimension of entertainment. For example, in *From Glasgow to Saturn*[6] he has funny poems made of non-social language—"The Loch Ness Monsters' Song", "Itinerary"—poems in code, science fiction poems, while *Wi' the Haill Voice*[7] consists of translations from Mayakovsky into Scots.

His main collection here—*From Glasgow to Saturn*—contains a number of poems on the scarcely digestible social injustices of Glasgow's living conditions and the dire consequences of these on human character. Morgan's technical brilliance dries up when faced with such inert and difficult subjects. Poems such as "Saturday Night" and "Death in Duke Street" are vivid

[5] *The Whittrick*. Akros (14 Parklands Avenue, Penwortham, Preston).
[6] *From Glasgow to Saturn*. Carcanet Press, £2.20, paper, £1.
[7] *Wi' the Haill Voice*. Carcanet Press, £3 paper, £1. All by EDWIN MORGAN.

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in their prosaic accumulation of details, and certainly arouse pathos or anger. But do these stubborn subjects necessarily demand purely descriptive story-telling, writing of the plainest kind? Morgan's techniques—dexterous and inventive in his more light-hearted poems—could have produced an energetic indignation, a style as vigorous as his versions from Mayakovsky.

Not so much Morgan's fault as the nature of the subject, his failure to satisfy what there might have been some entitlement to expect does suggest something about the limitations of technique cultivated in a context of bravado and daring. The most important subjects simply resist that sort of open linguistic engagement. For example, in Morgan's otherwise excellent "Glasgow Sonnets" his Italian form is ill at ease in an environment of tenements, high-rise flats and unemployment. Although it is possible to admire his formal approach as a device for holding off sentimentality or a tendency to sprawl, the dynamic of the sonnet lures both poet and reader into a literary atmosphere. The poet seems to be in disguise. But the writing is good, with steady iambic rhythm and emphatic rhymes:

> *But stalled lives never budge.*
> *They linger in the single-ends that use*
> *their spirit to the bone, and when they trudge*
> *from closemouth to laundrette their steady shoes*
> *carry a world that weighs us like a judge.*

Sympathy, as some character says in a novel by Gorky, is "feeling by halves." Morgan's maddened compassion is divorced from a political dimension. And in his *Instamatic Poems*,[8] unmoralised snapshots from newspaper stories and photographs display a tantalising awareness of many and varied social wrongs and ironies. "Look at this," the poet seems to say, in anger or bewilderment, and then walks off, abandoning his snapshot to his album. He is "playing the game" of poetry and not playing the game. B. Brecht would have thrown a fit. And there is a similarity here to Brecht's *Kriegsfibel*, which consisted of newspaper photographs collected over a period and published with harsh, and unequivocal, four-line poems. But then perhaps only poets can justify what Trotsky called "the odious privilege of holding a passive political position."

It is when reading his splendid versions in Scots of Mayakovsky that Morgan's passivity appears strangest. Morgan's unorthodox techniques, and orthodoxly sympathetic attitudes, are distant from the Mayakovsky of "A Slap in the Face for Public Taste", his pre-Revolution manifesto. I suspect that Morgan's true poetic character is to be found in "Shantyman", "Floating off to Timor", and "Blue Toboggans" —musically imaginative, strange, mellow poems, not so much unorthodox as unique.

POETS OF THE REMOTE COUNTRYSIDE have it made in terms of sentiment. There's nothing the urban literary crowd likes better than poems about hens, buzzards, hedgehogs, the days when eagles were eagles and there were fish in the sea, or about the poet's wry and labouring father. Only such a poet would attempt to get away with a phrase like "Hens are inhuman." Hens are eggs and dinners.

Alasdair Maclean's[9] book therefore recommends itself to my taste about as strongly as *Ring of Bright Water*. Attitudes that decide the city is awful by definition are far from sociological truth, and indicative of an anti-social hermitage and withdrawal as well as the usual rural arrogance. That, of course, is far from the whole story as far as Maclean's poems are concerned. In "At the Peats", perhaps too reminiscent of Heaney's "Digging", and "Death of an Old Woman", reminiscent of Iain Crichton Smith's "Old Woman", there are positive signs of harsh social anger.

Although there is much evidence from the nature of Maclean's writing that he confuses documentary and poetic impulses, he provides an expert sense of life and predicament. His book is informative as well as personal. Geographical loneliness has its counterpart in his melancholy, especially in "Two by One", a moving poem about his bucolic bachelordom, but self-indulgent.

From the Wilderness is a poetry of spokesmanship of place. Maclean has a high regard for what he offers, and the least attractive aspect of his writing concerns his estimate of the Poet as an important person:

> *I leave the foothills of the images*
> *and climb. What I pursue's not means but ends.*
> *You may come, if you've a mind to travelling.*
> *Meet me at the point where the language bends,*

he says in "To the Reader." Remoteness encourages that sort of attitude, while Nature, too, can trick the poet into an under-estimation of the importance of human affairs. Maclean seldom falls for that; but it may be significant that his poems about animals—"Rams", "Our Bull"—provoke a more austere concentration from him. His obsessively intense observation, its strenuous concern with masculinity, has the

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[8] *Instamatic Poems*. By EDWIN MORGAN. Ian McKelvie (65 Lakenheath, London N14 4RR). 90p

[9] *From the Wilderness*. By ALASDAIR MACLEAN. Gollancz, £2, paper £1.

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quality of Ted Hughes. Maclean, however, digresses with ruthlessly inappropriate similes:

Such a massive casing to guard such a tiny brain—
as if Fort Knox were built to house a single penny!

MACLEAN'S BEST WORK could arise from his virtually unique social position:

If you're a peasant who writes poetry
and bear the stamp of it on all you say
your family are those you visit most
and home is how they live when you're away.

This wryly perceived fact is familiar from Northern working-class writers, but its implications have never been fully extended in poetry. Maclean dramatises his identity too exhaustively in terms of place. Yet his poems are markedly more important as social testimony than those of the other writers discussed in this review. He avoids taking this aspect of his work to a conclusion, although there are signs that this might be beginning to happen. The difficulty of doing that—of exploring interiority rather than landscape—might prevent much of the loose and inept versifying of "Thoughts After Rain"—

The chaos falls on me. It's my job to
re-form a mass or re-define a border.
I've simply had a metaphor thrust at me
and been told to put the disarray in order,

which has to live in a book that contains such excellent lines as these from "Some Rules for Visiting a Deserted House":

Avoid the mirror on the landing.
It will be thirsty.

The Settembrini Waltz

Time was, the fund of knowledge
Led to the barricades
And not, as in this College,
To making higher grades.

That was the great Cenacle
When dew formed in the night
Would coruscate and sparkle
On police boots polished bright.

When pages out of Balzac
And things the Fathers wrote
Were more than some Old Pals Act
Or Urban Guerrilla's quote.

But polish up your Fanon
And keep your Brechtwerk gay,
The latest sine qua non
Is Ethnic Shadowplay.

Hearing the Appassionata
Sapped Lenin's will to fight
But Cage's cool self-starter
Sits squadrons down to write.

Let's end it one cold morning
With bullets in a bed,
All ironies self-scorning
And liberal Europe dead.

Peter Porter

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EAST & WEST

Along the Soviet Frontier

Where China Begins

By David Markish

I HAVE OFTEN BEEN to the Soviet-Chinese border in recent years; sometimes approaching it on foot, sometimes on horseback with a military patrol. This was in the Central Asian zone where the frontier line scrabbles over the sharp peaks of the Pamirs and the high Tien Shan plateau.

I ought really to begin with the names themselves—Pamir and Tien Shan.

The Russians, with their penchant for beautiful names, call the Pamirs "the roof of the World"—though in the original Persian it means something rather different: "the Feet of Death." But the Persians who once gave the name *Pamir* to this gigantic agglomeration of rock now no longer lay claim to it. Until quite recently they were still up in arms over the fate of the small Iranian resort of Firyuza, which passed bloodlessly to the Russians after World War II. The Russians, it seems, merely forgot to leave; for Firyuza is the only comparatively cool place near Ashkhabad, in the southern Soviet territory of Turkmenia, and all Turkmenia's leading lights of Party and Government live there. . . . It would appear that the Persians were somehow suitably compensated for the loss of Firyuza, and ceased to agitate.

The Tien Shan is rather different. Tien Shan in Chinese means "the Stones of Heaven." And in this frontier zone of Soviet Kirghizia not only the Chinese name has survived, but also Chinese influence. The Russians would gladly be rid of both, but it is extraordinarily difficult. One could easily enough name the Tien Shan mountains after, say, Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin) or Leonid Ilyich (Brezhnev)—the Russians are past masters at re-naming places. But such a tactic would be unsubtle and, besides, would cause loud protests in China. And as for Chinese influence in Kirghizia, there seems to be no way of rooting it out. The Kirghiz people, who have maintained close contacts with China for good geographical and historical reasons for a very long time, do not share the Russian hate and contempt for the Chinese. Neither do they believe the primitive, battering-ram anti-Chinese propaganda of the Russian "ideological war" with China. As with any oppressed national minority, the Russian "Big Brother's" propaganda causes a backlash: it only increases the Kirghizes' pro-Chinese sympathies. And the Russian methods of dealing with this dangerous disaffection are amazingly primitive. They changed the name of the village called Kitai (China) on the southern shore of Lake Issyk-Kul, and closed the Chinese eating-house in the district capital, Przhevalsk.

Meanwhile, the Kirghiz will not forget that some of their people live in Northern China, having fled there after the crushing of the anti-Russian rebellion of 1915. So as far as the Russians are concerned the whole Soviet-Kirghiz-Chinese problem boils down to a Kirghiz-Russian antagonism. It is not for nothing that the Russians, who comprise about half the population of Kirghizia, call the indigenous population "savages" for brevity and convenience. As the Kirghiz national intelligentsia has slowly come up in the world, both the label and the situation have become increasingly intolerable. And there is—as yet—no sign of another Stalin to extirpate, root and branch, the dangerous growth of the Kirghiz nationalist intelligentsia—as happened once before in 1937.

However—to get back to the Soviet-Chinese frontier.

One sector of it is approached from Lake Issyk-Kul *via* the Barskaun gorge—a beautiful gorge overgrown with opium poppies and Tien Shan firs. Along the bottom of the gorge, which

DAVID MARKISH *is a well-known young Russian poet and novelist. His wife led a remarkable campaign on his behalf in London ("The Markish Case" became a cause célèbre in the British press) and he was finally given an exit visa to emigrate from the Soviet Union. He now lives with his wife in Israel, and has just completed an autobiographical volume which includes an account of his "exotic" travels in nomadic Siberia. The Russian-Chinese border zones are, of course, normally closed, except to holders of special permits issued by the militia on the request of Soviet media, in Markish's case on the recommendation of the weeklies "Oganiok" ("Look", satirical) and "Soviet Union", for which he was collecting material for articles.*

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rises steeply as one goes south, rushes a river, narrow, deep, and unnavigable. On the bank of this river, at the very mouth of the gorge, stands the frontier-post. It is a stockade enclosing a group of buildings: the barracks, the stable, the command post, the detention cell, the store, a house for the commander of the post and another for his political deputy (these two generally have their families living at the post with them). This is encouraged by the top brass, who care about the sexual fulfilment of frontier service officers far from curious eyes in uninhabited and inaccessible places. The same cannot be said for the other ranks. They, as the local saying goes, just have to lump it for their three years' service. . . .

Barskaun is a typical mountain border post, a good 120 miles inside the actual frontier. Its guards keep the narrow mouth of the gorge under observation and check the documents of those travelling from the frontier into the interior and vice versa. Local residents need a special rubber stamp in their passports, and visitors a pass from the militia for entry to the frontier region, which is given only for a strictly limited period.

Ten years or so ago all this was simple, easily understood and definitive. At that time the border-posts hardly existed. It never occurred to the Chinese to defect to the Soviet Union; and the Russians did not steal on moonless nights into neighbouring China. The frontier guards, in dress uniforms, with brass bands and sports galas, handed over the *Belaya noga* forward post on the frontier line to the Kirghiz shepherds as a "cultural centre" and retired into the rear. The premises became a shop, a medical centre, and a post office. Hardly had the soldiers left than the shepherds, singing lustily, filled in all the baths. They were obviously troublesome and useless things to maintain.

I SPENT TWO MONTHS in the *Belaya noga* culture-centre one summer and early autumn. I hunted wild goats with the shepherds and nobody interfered with us in the slightest. There were no Russian game-inspectors, and the frontiersmen had left those regions. We once hunted some twelve miles south-east of *Belaya noga*; and when I asked, "Where does China begin?" the shepherds merely waved their hands vaguely about. They neither knew nor cared exactly where Kirghizia ended and China began.

In September the rains came and the first snow fell. The track was flooded and washed away, and the little mail-plane stopped coming; the weather had broken for good. I decided to ride back to Issyk-Kul. My friend the shepherd lent me an unsaddled yak, a vile-tempered beast with long black hair and lop-sided horns as thick as my arm. This ungulate took the mountains like a small tank. No horse could have tackled the track that the yak, snorting distressingly, managed with ease.

Towards the end of the first day's ride I happened upon the *yurt* of a solitary nomad shepherd. The shepherd was exceedingly poor and like all poor mountain people exceedingly hospitable. He invited me to share his evening meal and to spend the night. I discovered a bottle of spirits somewhere about my person and after the first half-tumbler our conversation became quite friendly.

The shepherd travelled with his flock, his wife, and his wife's sister. The *yurt* was filled with the wailing of three tiny children. The shepherd himself was a fine good-natured fellow with vast biceps and a bull neck. With all his goods and chattels he was on his way to winter pastures on the Chinese border. Once the talk got on to hunting and to blood-sucking collective-farm managers we had a common language. Soon he was offering to let me stay the winter with him. He promised me first-class hunting for goats and snow leopards, meat every day, and his wife's sister as a temporary mate.

"Stay with us," the shepherd said, "you won't be sorry. The air here is wonderful. And in six weeks or so we'll go over into China for gunpowder and flour."

"Into China!?"

"Certainly," the shepherd said, not understanding my surprise. "Into China. We'll leave in the morning, no need to hurry, and we'll be there by afternoon. It's two whole days each way into Issyk-Kul."

"What about the frontier guards?" I asked. "They know you, I suppose."

"Chinese Walls of Steel"

Peking, September 1973

At a communist party rally in the "Flaming Mountain" region near Urumchi, in China's far western Sinkiang province, 10,000 people resolved "to construct walls of steel along the north-west Chinese border to guard against surprise attacks" from Russia.

The meeting, which was organised to demonstrate support for the recent 10th Communist party Congress, raised slogans and demonstrated in favour of "strengthening war preparations, raising vigilance to defend the motherland."

The rally was, in fact, a sharp rebuke to the Russians, who have recently made the non-Chinese minorities of the frontier regions the targets of an intense propaganda campaign.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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The shepherd waved the frontier guards aside. "Never mind them! When did you ever see a frontiersman in these parts? They spend all their time down there on their backsides, they've no business here."

"Have you been to China before?" I asked.

"Of course I have, dozens of times. You take half-a-dozen sheep over with you and bring back all the stuff you need. If you like I can take you to Urumchi or Kashgar and leave the women to keep the flock going."

"How do you manage on the border?" I persisted. "What about the barbed wire and searchlights and watch-towers. . . ."

"There's none of that," the shepherd interrupted. "Just mountains and more mountains. The Chinese and the Kirghiz are sort of cousins, anyway."

The shepherd was a splendid fellow, all right, but rather weak on politics.

AND NOW PERHAPS the time has come to talk about those who guard the Soviet Union's frontiers.

The forces deployed directly on the borders—on the frontier posts—are not part of the Soviet Army and are not subordinate to Andrei Grechko, the Minister of Defence. The frontier forces come under the Committee for State Security, the KGB, and the head of the frontier division is answerable directly to Andropov, the KGB chairman. Those called up into the frontier forces for their three-year military service are (generally) uneducated, ignorant youths from middle Russia, the Ukraine, and Siberia who have not got round to reading "dangerous" books by Soviet and Western writers, whose ideas about life in the West are vague in the extreme, and who are firmly convinced that the Capitalist class or the Bourgeoisie, having supped the blood of the working people, are dreaming of crossing the frontiers and attacking the Soviet Union. The political management of the frontier forces sees to it that as few Kirghiz locals as possible serve on the Kirghiz-Chinese border. Kirghiz frontiersmen are to be found all over the place, in the Far East, in the West, in the North—anywhere but Kirghizia. For in no circumstances may the protection of the borders be entrusted to those born in the border zone; they are unreliable, they do not hate the Chinese, it might not be beyond them to feel pity for their brother Kirghiz in the border zone. Therefore, it is best to post Russians and Ukrainians to Kirghizia.

Service in the frontier forces is much tougher and more enervating than in the Soviet Army, which is why a great many frontier-officers try to get a transfer. But while getting out of the frontier force is an extremely complicated process for an officer, for a private soldier it is out of the question. In his three years' service on the frontier he does not get a single home leave (he might, it is thought, blurt out some item of classified information or conspire with some intending defector). For in the Tien Shans the concept of "border" or "frontier" is something pretty vague. The Russians must be kicking themselves now for not having marked the frontier line before it was too late, for not ploughing a strip to show up footprints, for not setting up a barrier of barbed wire and camouflaged tripwires. It is no longer possible to make good this omission. The appearance in the frontier zone of a man with a shovel, let alone a tractor or bulldozer, is seen by the Chinese as a serious provocation. The Chinese seemingly live in hopes of some future adjustment of the frontier and will not have the line marked. Even the Russians, to tell the truth, do not know along which stream or hollow precisely the frontier runs. As for the Chinese, they approach the question with a punctiliousness that infuriates the Russians. So the Russian talk is all about the grain they gave the Chinese, the aircraft factories they built for them, and their black ingratitude. . . . (The Russians never learn—"black ingratitude" was in evidence, yet again, after the events in Albania, after the Czechoslovak August, and after the expulsion of Soviet military experts from Egypt.)

I recently went from Frunze, the Kirghiz capital, to one of the highest mountain frontier posts—Turugart. Turugart lies some ten thousand feet above sea-level on a magnificent, vast snow-field, a few miles away from where the Soviet-Chinese frontier supposedly runs. Having safely crossed the Naryn mountains, our GAZ-69 military truck entered the township of At-Bashi. Although at least sixty miles from the border, At-Bashi is declared to be in the "frontier zone," and lives according to the rules of a bad spy film.

The driver stopped outside the military post; there were some documents to be rubber-stamped. Meanwhile I climbed out and crossed the street to a café. I was dressed for the mountains in jeans, a leather jacket and sun-glasses, with two cameras slung round my neck. Among the inhabitants of At-Bashi promenading in their body-warmers and quilted trousers I was an unusual sight.

I had hardly reached the counter when I was seized by several people. They twisted my arm up behind my back in the approved manner and thus conducted me to the command post where my driver was getting the papers in order.

"We've caught a spy!" my captors reported to the officer in charge.

A minute later I was asking the embarrassed

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citizens of At-Bashi what made them think I was a spy.

"Well," they mumbled, "what with your dark glasses and those cameras. . . ."

My arguments to the effect that a real spy would hardly go into a café festooned with cameras left them unconvinced.

We arrived in Turugart towards evening. The commander was away, and the senior sergeant who was his deputy, a young Ukrainian, looked at my papers and then took me into the guard-room—a claustrophobic place adorned with educative posters and maps. He sat down at the table opposite and never took his eyes off me.

Glancing around the room, my gaze stopped on a poster depicting a Kalashnikov rifle.

"No looking left!" the sergeant ordered.

So I looked right. There hung a map of the USSR of the kind that can be bought at any bookstall.

"No looking right either!" the watchful sergeant added to cover himself.

"Well then," I said, "show me the stable, I'd like to have a look at your horses."

"Against regulations," the sergeant announced economically.

Finding all this tedious, I made a point of annoying the sergeant by constantly turning my head this way and that.

Finally he said, "We've got a bed ready for you—in the detention cell, I'm afraid. . . . Why don't you go and have a rest!"

There was no point in arguing. I stared at the huge Tien Shan stars through the barred window, and waited for the commander to return.

The commander—his name was Marat—arrived between two and three in the morning. I was immediately transferred from the cell to Marat's house, the sergeant obediently carrying my rucksack over to its new home.

I explained to Marat over a bottle of vodka that I wanted to accompany the mounted border forces on their inspection of the frontier.

"You can do that," said Marat, "but you must take great care not to let your horse stray into China."

"What if it does?" I asked.

"The patrol goes out at night," Marat explained. "But the Chinese are patrolling the zone every night as well, with dogs—and they're quite some dogs. . . ."

"Alsatians?"

"Not likely," said Marat. "They've got their own breed, enormous great beasts. They'll tear you and the horse to pieces as soon as look at you."

"That must be a joke," I said.

"It's a fact!" said Marat. "Getting involved with the Chinese means big trouble—it's just not worth it. One thing they do—they drive a berserk yak over to our side of nights. Only last week the patrol from the next post along the line tried to drive it back again, but as soon as they got close the yak charged and ripped one man's guts right out."

"Why on earth didn't they shoot it?" I asked.

"That's the whole point! Shooting is strictly forbidden! We're not allowed to shoot anywhere along the border, in case the Chinese get the wrong idea. That's why we never see fresh meat, we've been living out of tins for two whole years—and we used to machine-gun wild goats and shove them straight into the pot. It's all those bloody Chinks' fault!" cried Marat with bitter conviction.

Hearing this I had to smile. In Russia the chronic shortage of shoes and meat and clothing is usually blamed on "the Jews." Here on the Chinese border they blamed it on "the Chinks." Everyone needs some scapegoat or other—it saves thought and relieves one's feelings.

THE MOUNTED INSPECTION PATROL to which I was attached consisted of two Russian youths: a sergeant and a private. The three of us were roused the next night at half-past three and issued with heavy quilted clothing, felt boots, and sheepskin coats. Hardly able to move under the weight we presented ourselves at the guard room for orders.

"You are going out to protect the state frontiers of the USSR," Marat announced in a solemn operatic voice, "into the sector . . ."—here Marat drew aside the curtain that covered a relief map on the wall. Almost the whole area of the map bore the legend: "*Territory disputed by China.*" The dotted line of the border passed through this territory. That was where we were to go at four in the morning and patrol until ten. . . . Looking at the secret map I could easily imagine small Chinese soldiers waiting to ambush us and the green glint in the eyes of their gigantic dogs.

"Give me a machine-gun, just in case," I begged. But they did not give me a machine-gun, just in case.

We mounted our horses with some difficulty and set off over the snow-field that glittered in the light of the low moon. The horses picked their way carefully, nearly up to their bellies in snow.

"It's your job to watch the sky," the sergeant told me.

I asked what that meant.

"If you see an aircraft, a rocket, or a parachutist, make a noise like an eagle," the sergeant explained.

"I can't make a noise like an eagle," I told him.

"Then make some other kind of noise," the

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sergeant decided. Evidently he was not particularly expecting aircraft, rockets, or paratroops that night.

"No smoking and no talking in the ranks!" was his last order.

An hour later, however, having dismounted for a "listen around", we all lit cigarettes.

"Are we in China?" I whispered to the sergeant, breaking the deathly stillness of the mountains.

"Haven't the foggiest," said the sergeant, sheltering the glow of his cigarette with his hand. "Could be."

"Where do you come from, yourself?"

"From the Rostov region," the sergeant replied. 'I'll be going home in eight months and thirteen days." And he swore, briefly but eloquently.

"Don't you like the Chinese?" I asked after a while.

"And why should I?" the sergeant retorted promptly. "Look at all the things we've given them—and they've. . . . Look, there's seven hundred million of them, maybe more. And none of them got two brass farthings to rub together! They'll eat us for breakfast. And they're so stupid —they eat snakes, would you believe it?"

Here the private put in his own two kopecks. "They're like ants—all over everything. If we don't crack down on them now we'll be having slanty-eyed grand-children. . . ."

"How do you expect to do that?" I asked. "They'll be sure to fight back."

"That's the hell of it," the private agreed. "They ought to have been stamped on long ago, before they had the Bomb. It could be too late now."

"No talking in the ranks!" said the sergeant. "Time to be off."

We started out again across the snow plain in Indian file. A sliver of sun appeared over the horizon, turning the sky jade and gold.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Between Democracy & Freedom

A German Dilemma

By Helmut Schelsky

POLITICAL "POLARISATION" in West Germany is not at an end—it is only just beginning. The division into two increasingly hostile blocs of the political forces which sustain the Federal Republic's political system is assuming fundamental shape. Yet those involved seem altogether unaware of the essential nature of their confrontation. It consists in the priority accorded to one or other of the principles governing the modern free democratic basis of Western societies: the principles of Democratisation and of the Separation of Powers.

The confrontation arising from the "polarisation" of political forces in Western Germany has no immediate connection with the onslaught of those elements which aspire to a radical change in the Federal Republic's political "system", although they not only profit by the polarisation of politically sustaining forces but encourage it. What is involved is an inherently "*system-immanente*" confrontation which will very probably—if unpredictably—govern our political destinies in the decade to come.

The basic political alignments which determined politics during the decades between 1949 and 1969, the "Adenauer Era", are now inoperative and have come to an end. Hence the inclusion in Chancellor Willy Brandt's 1969 policy statement of the formula which was deliberately intended to herald a new era in West German politics: the call to "risk more democracy (*Mehr Demokratie zu wagen.*") "More democracy" was the starting-signal and programme for the "polarisation" which dates historically from this statement of principle, delivered by the new head of government in the euphoria of taking office. Dr Adenauer's heirs, unexpectedly condemned to opposition status and debilitated by long years of pragmatic governmental habits, have yet to come up with the counter-formula "More freedom."

ALTHOUGH *the Germans have at no time in their history lived in a freer community than they do in the* Bundesrepublik, *and although they have never had fewer worries about their individual existence than they do at present, many of them are fearful of the future and, above all, of political developments. They suspect that there has been a fundamental change in domestic politics in the last four or five years. Their faith in the "common sense" of their fellow-men is dwindling. They feel a greater need to ward off "threats", and a compulsion to behave more "politically" than they did during the first two decades of the Federal Republic; yet no new certainties, faith, or assurance appear to be emerging from this politicisation of wide areas of social and private life.*

The following article by Professor HELMUT SCHELSKY, *the Bielefeld sociologist, sets forth the essential conflict that has gripped the entire political structure of Western Germany (and no reader will fail to note its pertinence to developments elsewhere in Europe and in America). At its heart rages the battle for the abolition or maintenance of "the separation of powers" in its capacity as the constitutive principle governing free social systems and political constitutions. It may well prove to be the fundamental issue for Western society.*

In this Western debate between the Burkean "new Conservatives" and the Jacksonian "radical liberals", Professor Richard Lowenthal, as a leading spokesman of the European socialist Left, will be replying to Helmut Schelsky in a forthcoming issue of ENCOUNTER.

A Hazardous Demand

TO PREVENT POSSIBLE misunderstandings, it is not my present concern to assess any individual politician, especially as any statesman's achievements (*e.g.* in foreign policy, and his influence on the development of domestic politics) are open to widely varying evaluation. This applies to Konrad Adenauer as it did to Metternich or Bismarck, and the same is true of Willy Brandt. I am not concerned, either, with the subjective motives and principles of an individual politician such as Brandt. His own formula—"risk more democracy"—actually implies that he was aware of the gamble involved in this basic political aim. That ideological mass movements can outstrip the moderate aims of reformers and turn them willy-nilly into the spokesmen of political developments which exceed the scope of their intentions is an experience which Chancellor Brandt may well be compelled to share with many others of his generation.

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The conflict of principle which is leading to polarisation embraces standpoints and controversies which are very old and have long been argued about on the stage of Western history. I don't want to go back to Aristotle, but I should mention that there is fresh relevance to two Age of Enlightenment approaches to "rational" politics. Once upon a time, above all in France, they were philosophically and politically pursued in association with the names Rousseau and Montesquieu. This does not, however, seem an appropriate place to engage in academic historical speculation. As a contemporary observer, the sociologist must be primarily concerned to disturb the academic, intellectual slumber induced by doses of conventional political wisdom, to point to the lurking problems that affect every individual member of our modern society, and to demonstrate the present relevance of political configurations which were pondered centuries ago. Our task is, in fact, to actualise and concretise these decisions to such an extent that any ordinary and academically unprejudiced fellow-citizen will be able to perceive their significance.

THIS CONFLICT OF PRINCIPLE concerns the question of how government can be so limited in its political authority over the governed that the individual's freedom to lead his own life is not impaired and that political authority pays due regard to the basic social convictions and requirements of the citizen. The fulfilment of these aims depends on the identity of those who govern. During the Age of Enlightenment, absolute monarchy held sway in ideological conjunction with the clerical orthodoxy of the churches. Neither plays any role today. Restrictions of authority must be directed against other "rulers."

These are two basic methods of restricting authority in society:

(1) The creation of an identity between rulers and ruled. This means that the People, who are ruled, simultaneously represent the supreme "Sovereign" and the source of political decision-shaping—according to the principle of Democracy.

(2) The distribution of political authority among relatively independent institutions which exercise mutual restraint and protect citizens by hindering the accumulation of authority. Experience having shown that power can be limited only by power—and authority only by authority—there is created a division of every kind of political authority, a balance of power, which assures the individual of liberty and areas of freedom—according to the principle of divided authority or the Separation of Powers or what in Germany we call *Gewaltenteilung*.

THESE TWO PRINCIPLES need not be mutually exclusive—indeed, they have always been jointly at work in modern Western polity and political constitutions. Even in the West German context, what is involved is not fundamental contrariety but a change of priority—a political preference which does not emerge clearly until the various effects of these principles of controlling authority are set forth in terms of ideal types. According to its oft-proclaimed political constitution, the Federal Republic embodies a harmonious blend of both principles in a "free democratic *Grundordnung*." It may be no accident that this formula gives precedence to the principle of Freedom rather than that of Democracy. When rulers assign programmatic precedence to "More Democracy" within this basic system, however, there is a tacit and unadmitted assumption that it will be associated with "less freedom." My present article is intended to clarify this dilemma in defence of the principle of "Freedom." The criterion which governs my analysis is how far the precedence accorded to any particular political principle has a bearing on the individual citizen's actual way of life.

THE PRACTICAL ESTABLISHMENT of an identity between rulers and ruled depends on intermediation—for *all* the ruled can never constitute the group responsible for ruling.

Such forms of intermediation are familiar enough. One is the election of proxies to whom the advocacy of particular political interests and convictions is "trustfully" assigned, there being a wide range of means whereby trust is bestowed on such representatives. Pluralistic party elections, or plebiscitary approval of a Party organisation which monopolistically represents the popular will, are comparatively "democratic." (Intervention by citizens who vote on individual government measures, as in the "direct democracy" of Switzerland, undoubtedly represents maximal democratic participation by the citizen in determining government intentions.) Other forms of relatively direct individual influence on government measures can consist in the representatives, whose mandate is subject to removal by vote. Here again, however, delegation of government authority to "agents" of the Popular Will remains the decisive legitimacy of democracy. Thus Western and Eastern democracy differ essentially in the mechanism whereby agents of the Popular Will receive their authorisation. The distinguishing feature of Western democracy consists—as Schumpeter (among others) clearly perceived—in competition on the open market for a majority of popular votes which will confer the political power of decision

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(or governmental authority) on one particular group of agents. Eastern democracy, which recognises no "political market", systematically monopolises the transmission of the Popular Will and governmental authority by a single party. In this case, internal party disputes assume the function of a competition for power (obvious discrepancies between public opinion and the Party line compel changes and the replacement of at least some party officials).

Thus, "More Democracy" in a Western democratic system can mean the following:

(1) An increased share by the public in the shaping and articulation of opinion, in the bestowal of political authority and its continuous actualisation.

(2) An extension of the special fields and areas of social life in which responsible executives are appointed.

(3) An automatic increase in the number of "agents" who, in their role as representatives (or persons entrusted with authority and the power of decision), pay heed to and continuously actualise the Popular Will which has thus been mobilised and extended.

Politicisation & Irrationalisation

ADVOCATES OF THE SLOGAN "More Democracy" regard any increased public participation in political opinion-shaping as an unalloyed advantage; likewise, in most cases, any growth in the number of active agents of the Popular Will (that is to say, of politically active personnel, honorary and professional, in all politicised institutions). On the face of it, this process does seem to fulfil the basic demand for identity between rulers and ruled to an ever-increasing extent. But, although it appears to augment popular influence on government authority, no heed is paid to the *disadvantages* that must be accepted in return for greater political activity on the part of the general public.

In contrast to so-called Eastern democracy, where this identification is accomplished *ab initio* by monopolistically-controlled acclamation (and where high degrees of concurrence are elicited from the ruled), greater participation within multi-party systems means a keener distinction between alternative forms of rule, in other words, sharper political conflict. This alternative democratisation finds its most consistent expression in the establishment of "two great camps" corresponding to the 19th-century class struggle, and in the continuous actualisation of political antitheses—of the sort which totalitarian states produce fictitiously but must in our case be engendered among citizens so as to achieve, say, a similar high participation in elections. The mechanisms of this greater public share in the political delegation of authority are well known. In as much as it is impossible to arrive at an expert assessment of increasingly complex governmental decisions, any greater share in delegations of authority calls for methods of "reducing complexity."

This can be done in three ways: *(1)* greater ideological primitivisation of the decisions to be taken; *(2)* application of non-political propaganda and advertising techniques to political decision-making; and, finally, *(3)* the reduction of political decision-making to a choice between congenial or uncongenial figureheads. The sociologist Karl Mannheim—like Schumpeter, a democrat of socialist persuasion—exhaustively described these methods of diminishing political rationality (or *Entsachlichung*, de-objectivisation) as a process of "fundamental democratisation." He realised that this form of democratisation devalues the rationality of political opinion-shaping because it inevitably accords greater prominence to mass-psychological procedures and practices. Thus, "More Democracy" means not only "more and continuous conflict" but "less rationality" as well.

THE MORE FULLY such political conflicts are mobilised, the more inevitable it is that their fronts should shift from the area of civil and government opinion-shaping to society's other institutions. Institutional decisions and administrative procedures are there subordinated to the general political confrontation. This political schematisation of conflicts first occurs where parties are anyway involved in moulding opinion, not only in local government but in broadcasting stations (TV, radio) and, above all, in organisations connected with industry, professional associations, and social services. It spreads to institutions normally regarded as "non-political", *i.e.* to churches, schools, universities and intellectual-cultural bodies, until political conflict finally undermines even those institutions—the Judiciary and the Armed Forces—which are traditionally supposed to be neutral *vis-à-vis* party politics.

"Democratisation", or the polarising politicisation of these spheres, consists in the fact that prospects of selection and promotion are increasingly subordinated to the criterion of membership of one of the two "great camps." The special problems affecting particular institutions become overshadowed by their enlistment for general political purposes. All such institutions become more and more a battle-ground for

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the political aspirations of those who feel less committed to the current purposes of the relevant institution than to seizing power within it for the advancement of basic "socio-political" aims.

Total Politics

THUS, "DE-OBJECTIVISATION" of institutions and the multiplication of general political claims to authority go hand in hand. Professional competence takes second place to political loyalty and commitment, both in the decision-making and administrative performance of the relevant organisation and, consequently, in the career prospects of the relevant personnel.

Aristotle recognised more than two thousand years ago that "excessive democracy" becomes transmuted into dictatorship. Political developments in our complex societies no longer unfold with such simplicity and speed. The Federal Republic of Western Germany is not threatened with "dictatorship" by Willy Brandt or Franz-Josef Strauss. On the other hand, increased "democracy" and "polarisation" do carry an unmistakable totalitarian whiff. Close scrutiny reveals that it is always the same people—ideologically motivated groups banded together for the acquisition of power—who now aspire to centralised control of politics, not only in our political parties but in all other institutions as well. "Totalisation" of politics need not be manifest in a one-party state alone. It can begin by asserting itself in the form of a "pluralistic totalitarianism", or the totalisation of two opposed blocs. The point at which this all-embracing polarisation of conflict turns into open civil war and the complete suppression of the "other camp" depends on the political opportunities of those who enjoy guaranteed predominance. The process can be deliberately protracted until the polarised tendency towards conflict creates a definite imbalance of power. In my judgment, our Federal Republic is now passing through this retrogressive phase in the trend towards totalitarian politicisation.

THE ESSENTIAL POINT of my analysis is that the "More Democracy" tendency, in the sense of greater popular participation in political opinion-shaping, must be paid for with the tendencies "more conflict", "less rationality", "more claims to authority" and "less objectivity." To the extent that it promotes (as it must) continuous politicisation, it must above all be purchased at the expense of a trend towards centralist and totalitarian assertions of power.

Those who well-meaningly champion the principle "More Democracy" fail to realise that the modern democratic state has safeguarded the individual against government authority primarily by the separation and countervailing control of "powers." This is the authentically liberal method of limiting authority. At the same time, the classical separation of powers into executive, legislature, and judiciary is only a special instance of this principle. Historically, the prime intention was to dismember the political authority wielded by monarchical absolutism. Because governmental authority was subordinated to the control of parliament (or the assembled representatives of popular sentiment and interests) and of the judiciary, in other words, to the control of special authorities, parliamentarianism and the constitutional state were geared from the outset to the protection of the interests and the liberty of the individual.

In contrast to that of Continental Europe, Anglo-American liberalism (Adam Smith *et al.*) always devoted more fundamental attention to the division and control of economic power. Despite the essential lack of interest in economics (particularly among our German liberals), separation of economic powers is a principle which has long governed our "*freiheitliche Grundordnung*", our "free basic system." It consists, for a start, in the extremely simple—and largely underrated—axiom that political and economic positions of power should not be identical; in other words, that political and economic decisions are not necessarily to be taken by the same people. Given the modern interweaving of economics and politics, this principle virtually entails that autonomous political and economic instruments of responsibility will be developed and compelled to cooperate—whereas, if decision-makers in this field are identical, the usual outcome is straightforward subordination of decisions to a single power. What is more, our economic system itself displays manifold separations of economic power. I mention only the autonomy of employers and employed in their role as wage-bargaining partners or contracting parties; entrepreneurial independence for the State and industrial associations; the structural diversity of employers as private owners, or corporations, or public utility undertakings, or State or co-operative enterprises; and the independence of various socio-political and professional organisations. Again, all economically-oriented institutions have their own peculiar independence. At worst it consists in the fact that they are not officially dependent on other institutions and that their executive or ruling body is itself appointed from within the institution.

Finally, this system of separate powers embraces a further series of "autonomies", old and new, *e.g.* the autonomy of the churches *vis-à-vis* the

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State, of universities and the school system *vis-à-vis* politicians and churchmen, of monopolistic radio and television organisations *vis-à-vis* the State and also *vis-à-vis* social and political interests. Likewise, in the narrower political sphere, the self-administrative autonomy of local government or the federalistic division of powers between the centre and the regions, in our German case between *Bund* and *Länder*. Incomplete though it is, my account of the manifold "separation of powers" in a modern "free" or "Open Society" social system will do for the moment.

Power Restrained by Power

HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE of *Gewaltenteilung*, the separation of powers, actually affect the status and conduct of individuals within such a social system?

In the first place, it provides the individual with far greater protection against all power-groupings than democracy can ever guarantee, despite (and sometimes because of) its majority support. The vital interests of the individual are by no means confined to the influence which he can exert on the political decisions of the supreme political authority. Their variety, incompatibility, and individuality are safeguarded above all by the individual's discovery of political representatives and patrons in the most diverse spheres of his life who will espouse his particular interests objectively, committedly, and without regard to whether he belongs to the majority or minority of voters in the current political constellation, what party he belongs to, or which one he happens to vote for. In concrete terms: my freedom as an individual consists in the fact that, when casting my vote in a *Bundestag* or *Landtag* election, I am not simultaneously choosing someone to represent my interests as an employee or civil servant, parent or TV-viewer, householder or investor. Nor will I run up against decision-making and administrative authorities in all these spheres of my life which have been politically programmed along identical lines. That a society should possess manifold institutions which make decisions on their own "political" responsibility—the institutional pluralisation of power—offers the essential guarantee of the individual's freedom to pursue his various interests and aspirations relatively "ungoverned."

However, I attach even more importance to a second effect which is linked with the separation of powers. Clearly, separation of powers and the autonomy of organisations and institutions follow on from the separation of *functions* within a complex society. This means that, for socially and sectionally important tasks, organisations or institutions come into being which are peculiarly restricted to their special field and which, in accordance with the separation of powers, are granted their own right of decision—in other words, varying degrees of "autonomy." These functionally diverse institutions, whose competence is legally secured and distinguished from that of other "powers", are then able to develop and represent the special field entrusted to them with comparative independence of general political objectives. The political will of the majority is replaced, as a framework of responsibility for institutional decisions, by expert knowledge and the acceptance of special forms of legality. There thus occurs in these institutions a process which classical Marxists hoped would bring about the rationalisation of politics: the replacement of man's dominion over man by the "administration of things (*Verwaltung von Sachen*)."

But this implies that the direction of these institutions derives its legitimacy from the fulfilment of special functions and the representation of special interests. General political beliefs must take second place. The selection of any institutional executive must be based on special competence, *e.g.* secured by evidence of some particular professional qualification. The opponents of this functional trend in pluralistic institutional policy—those who seize power by means of "democratisation" and universal politicisation—derogate specialised executive responsibility as "Technocracy" (though they themselves are only too willing to take orders from the "technocrats" of the political power-game, the electoral tacticians or the militant strategists).

THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS institutional separation of powers are obvious. The individual citizen, or *Bürger*, can be certain that his particular spheres of interest are tended with objective competence and responsibility. He is not, as a saver or shareholder, subject to overall SPD or CDU policy; or, as a farmer, teacher, or student, unduly dependent in the representation of his particular occupational interests on majority decisions that stem from the general moulding of political opinion.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this system of pluralistic professional and governmental authorities depends primarily on this factor—whether institutions possess senior personnel who are prepared, independent of Party political alternatives, to invest their personal and wholly professional initiative and readiness to accept responsibility in the management of these

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"concerns" without having to assert their authority by doing battle on the field of majority democratisation. Thus the trend towards "More Democracy" not only diminishes the practical objectivity of institutional procedures in favour of their politicisation; it also, and more especially, reduces the number of those who, although willing to take personal initiative and accept social responsibility in those circumscribed spheres of existence in which they deem themselves professionally competent and capable, are unprepared to take part in the central power-struggle.

The weaknesses of the separation of powers principle, if taken to extremes, undoubtedly repose in its incapsulation of autonomous spheres of activity and their institutions into administrators of the *status quo*. It sometimes happens that individual institutions are unable effectively to solve the problems entrusted to them by the politico-social totality with due regard for changes in society as a *whole* and new social requirements. This means simply that institutions established with an eye to the separation of powers are also subject to the continuous pressure of reform in fulfilling their social functions. To infer from this that the Separation of Powers principle should be abolished, or suppressed, would be as illogical as to conclude that the weaknesses of the Democratic Principle warrant doing away with the pluralistic-democratic moulding of political opinion. Although the first reaction is currently more widespread among democratic parties in West Germany's Federal Republic, whereas the second is manifested only by a few totalitarian extremists of the Right or, more commonly, of the Left, the trend from dismantling the "separation of powers' towards total "supercession of the system" (*Systemüberwindung*) can hardly be ignored.

WE MAY THEREFORE ASSERT, on the one hand, that separation of powers creates far more varied safeguards for the individual, notably in his professional and private spheres of existence, than democratisation. It extends the range of objectivity in social life, offers the sole prospect of greater rationality in every field of politics, and, finally, increases man's scope for independent action and responsibility extraneous to the alternative democratisation of political parties, which leads to centralisation. It should, on the other hand, be constantly pointed out that these two principles are mutually dependent and supervisory, not mutually exclusive. What we Germans term a free democratic basic system, a *freiheitlich demokratische Grundordnung*, is precisely descriptive of a balanced relationship between Democracy and the Separation of Powers in an ordered social life.

This balance between the two political principles has been disturbed in the Federal Republic by the slogan "More Democracy" and displaced in favour of the "democratisation" principle. The direct result is aggressive polarisation of political forces into a new friend-or-foe line-up.

THE FIRST SYMPTOM is intensified politicisation of all citizens—a process which leading members of the Socialist-Liberal coalition (Scheel, Ehmke) expressly welcomed on the night of the 1972 *Bundestag* elections. Ministerpräsident Kühn (SPD) described the poll of over 90% as an expression of West German democracy's political maturity because turn-outs of this magnitude were normally confined to totalitarian countries. The idea that "politicisation" of this order could only have been achieved by boosting a sense of dramatic conflict as in totalitarian countries, by carrying the party and governmental struggle into every place of employment, every factory and (with the aid of a lower voting age and a politically committed teaching profession) into every family, seems remote from the minds of the politicians who advocate "democratisation." That a certain percentage of voluntary non-voters in a highly civilised democratic country could conceivably be a sign of political stability—in that one section of the population expects either equal benefit or equal detriment (but at least no definite threat to its vital interests) from every government which seriously contests an election—strikes "democratisers" who aspire to total political commitment as a virtual blasphemy on God or Democracy.

A Choice Made Easy

I HAVE ARGUED that the price of intensifying conflict in the interests of democratisation is ideological reprimitivisation, non-political manipulation of the voter, and a devaluation of electoral activity into the cult of individual figures and the rallying behind a leader. The last German election campaign provides ample evidence for these assertions.

The class warrior's socio-religious distinction between capitalist goats and working-class sheep—a Capital-*versus*-Worker antithesis deliberately revived by the radical Left in its antiquarian dogmatism—has been adopted by leading representatives of the democratic parties, whether in the formula "class struggle from above" (Brandt) or in the imputation that social

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democracy is the vanguard of a crypto-communist "socialisation" (Strauss). Given the future prospect of slender electoral majorities, this means that half the West German population are automatically branded as "capitalists" and the other half as communistically-tinged "socialists" (discounting the 8% who evidently aspire to be both).

The alarmism and intimidation that accompanied this ideologisation by both parties transformed the last *Bundestag* elections into the most backward-looking and ideological political clash in the history of the Federal Republic. Both sides issued post-election statements to the effect that they hadn't really been in deadly earnest and intended to rediscover "common ground." But this merely revealed how stupid or ideologically crude they considered the electorate to be. Ideological manipulation is matched by manipulating electoral tactics. The last election has justly been described, by Professor Erwin K. Scheuch, as an "utterly unplanned process effected with the utmost material expenditure and manipulative resources of the finest technical quality." In fact, non-political propaganda steered along by demoscopic psychology is increasingly replacing arguments based on vital interests or an appeal to political judgment. It was a practice of which CDU electioneers were especially guilty, but it was equally noticeable in all other parties (including the DKP, the German Communist Party). In this sense, "soliciting" electoral votes implies a deliberate assumption that voters are non-political and irrational. The fact that this is partly true does not excuse the parties' growing tendency to make "advertising" the basis of their electoral infiltration. The undisguised—indeed, brazen—way in which all parties apply this principle betokens a decline in democracy and, more particularly, a denial of the claim to represent reason in politics.

THIS ANTI-RATIONAL TENDENCY is seen at its clearest when elections are rubber-stamped into a vote for an attractive and symbolic "leader" (it is permitted to use the word *Führer* again).

Although all parties in office make a habit of symbolising their real or putative successes in the figure of a Head of Government, this "personalisation" of elections does, when promoted to become the supreme electioneering principle, produce a situation where the Government Party can never remove its election-leader, even in the event of obvious governmental weaknesses, because he has acquired undue personal authority *via* the mass media—and where the Opposition cannot replace its own "personalised" candidate without conceding a substantial measure of public prestige. In the course of this development, democracy becomes a straightforward bestowal of trust on a single person and differs, I am afraid, only in degree from the mentality prevailing at similar plebiscites in dictatorships.

One example may be offered here, and it characterises this personalisation of politics. It was an election advertisement which displayed side by side, under the headline "*Diese Wahl fällt uns leicht* (We find the choice an easy one)", a retouched picture of Brandt and a pallid photograph of Barzel, the former adorned with a large voter's cross of approval. Beneath were the names of Nobel Prize-winners, university professors, authors and journalists. What an enviable capacity for simplifying political judgments! And how non-politically stupid must have been those who found the choice a difficult one! One has to trace the course of German democratic elections back to the presidential election of 1932—in which Hindenburg and Hitler were rival candidates—to discover instances where political judgment was similarly abbreviated into straightforward symbols of "human trust." In line with this process of crude personification, the extolling of some figures is matched by the disparagement of others. This was particularly noticeable during the last election campaign in controversies over Brandt and Strauss, and the latter was inflated into little short of a fascist bugbear.

THESE APPLICATIONS of the "More Democracy" principle are creating a friend-or-foe dichotomy among the democratic parties of the Federal Republic, and this forms the nucleus of "polarisation."

That the *Freund-Feind* relationship—a supposedly basic political category drawn from the nationalistic struggles of the European past—should now begin to disrupt the political system of the Federal Republic is attributable to the influence wielded by extreme radicals on both sides. There is historical irony in the fact that it should be under a Federal President whose presidential hobby consists in the sponsorship of research into Peace and Conflict—a form of research whose "modern" version he proudly credits with "exploring the emergence of Friend-or-Foe images"—that such a massive Friend-or-Foe relationship and intensification of political conflict should be re-created among the inhabitants of the Federal Republic (not, it may be added, without substantial assistance from the so-called *Friedensforschung*). Symptomatic of this Friend-or-Foe mentality is the assertion by an SPD campaign-worker, the Nobel Prize author currently held in high esteem (Heinrich Böll), that the danger of an opposition victory at the polls would be nothing less than *lebensgefährlich*.

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"Citizen's Initiatives"

IT IS MY BASIC THESIS that the inordinate campaign for "More Democracy" is tending to destroy the separation of powers. It is tending to produce a party-political "polarisation" even within the very institutions which, prior to this intensification of conflict, were supposed to be safeguarded by their "autonomy." The West German scene is rich in evidence of this too, particularly since the last election campaign.

The most striking instance of encroachment by unofficial bodies and groups on party-political opinion-shaping was the massive intervention of "Industry", ranging from pressure by corporate firms and industrialists of every size and shape to the financing of anonymous or responsible-looking election advertisements in favour of the CDU. Intervention by powerful industrial interests—whose electoral backing is invariably sought by all parties—far exceeded its usual regrettable level. This state of affairs rightly drew special criticism from Willy Brandt. He regarded it as interference in the party-political opinion-shaping process by a group whose existence and function had never been fundamentally threatened by the Government whose leader he was. What I fail to understand is his patently antiquated radical interpretation of this process as *Klassenkampf von oben,* a "class struggle from above", or his equally patent sense of hurt and outrage. He evidently forgot that by imprudently speaking of the "mobilisation of industrial concerns" for the attainment of purely political ends, and by carrying the election campaign into factory works committees with debatable justification, he (long before the election campaign) provoked firms into the very reaction which might have been expected. In other words, he accelerated the party politicisation of industry in such a way as to impair the separation of powers.

The same development can be observed among trade unions, notably the DGB. Full-page advertisements by business associations were matched by equally full-page advertisements stemming from works-committee chairmen who were hardly entitled to publish them in the name of their trade-union members. A similar state of affairs applies when trade unions resolve to expel CDU members and labour leaders (*e.g.,* Katzer) or, after the election, to sever business links with a firm whose proprietors had supported the CDU, not only in fact (for no one can prevent them from so doing) but with a flourish of trumpets. Politically, the logical conclusion should be that CDU members or sympathisers no longer feel themselves to be represented by such trade unions and that their departure from a trade union which has so obviously been politicised is simply a matter of proper political timing. Polarisation is clearly an escalatory process in which everyone conscientiously embarks on the party-political "democratisation" of institutions that have hitherto been party-politically neutral—but is outraged when (as anyone might have predicted) the party-political sword turns out to cut both ways with equal facility.

INTERVENTION in the last election campaign came not only from "Industry" but from a social group which had previously pursued a neutral line in party-political controversies—the so-called *Wähler-initiativen,* "voters' initiatives." Mobilised primarily by the SPD, these electioneers, whose campaigns require the same sort of additional financial expenditure as businessmen's propaganda advertisements, clearly prove on closer sociological inspection to form a social group which coheres for the sake of a particular class interest and thus has claims to power. More than two-thirds of the signatures on these appeals by Voters' Initiatives, whether nation-wide or regional, belong to scientists (ranging from Nobel Prize-winners to professors and students) as well as to authors, artists, clergymen, and teachers—in other words, to persons who bear no immediate governmental or party political responsibility and owe their individual freedom and unlettered cultural activity to the very same professional autonomy that flows from the "separation of powers." Their role as "citizens" is specious.

It is humanly and professionally understandable that a socially conscious novelist like Günter Grass, who needs renewed contact with social reality as copy for his literary output, should don the guise of a "Citizen" and tour the country electioneering, half as Harun al-Rashid and half as missionary. That whole groups of scholars should indulge in this narrow form of self-politicisation, however, can only be described as "*Lust am Untergang,*" revelling in the decline of one's own institutional freedom. Those who engage in this form of party-political commitment do not do so as "Citizens." What they place in the party-political scales is, above all, an academic title and a prestige which may be scholarly or professional but clearly has no political justification. These open campaign workers can't be accused of "anonymity"; instead, they exploit their names and titles like commercial billboard enthusiasts. If the political preference of all these "Citizens" had been attested with their names alone, surely as democracy requires, Professor Dr Fritz Müller's

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signature would have carried no more weight than that of a wage-earning or salaried namesake and there would be no objection to any such "initiative."

But no. He and his like constitute themselves a group of "Opinion-Leaders", of political tutors to the Nation, on the strength of achievements which, while they connote neither expert political knowledge nor political responsibility, simulate it in order to manipulate the political decision of the electorate. (Who, for instance, would think twice about the political commitment of a citizen named Manfred Steinbach, had he not ennobled his electoral call to arms with the title "Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology, former German long-jump champion"?) It is deplorable that this SPD-initiated practice of mobilising expertly acquired professional prestige for party purposes has been copied, though with a significant lack of success, by the other parties. The latter have failed to realise that their electoral supporters in the above groups are averse to party-political commitment precisely because they classify their private personal freedom for independent professional activity as a superior political asset.

PARTY POLITICISATION—or "higher democratisation" on the part of so-called "citizens' initiatives"—is having unpredictable and unavoidable repercussions on these intellectual fields of professional activity. If all but a few members of a university faculty adopt a party-political stand, won't the responsible Minister justifiably be asked if he has been influencing university appointments in a one-sidedly party-political manner? If a political scientist proclaims from the outset that one of his principal aims will be to campaign against a particular *Land* government, is it surprising that the latter should be unwilling to appoint him despite a clear recommendation in his favour? If publicly and unequivocally committed SPD- (or FDP- and CDU-) authors, clergymen, and teachers dominate their particular institutions, who can blame a supporter of the other parties if he no longer reads or buys the books of the said authors, ceases to attend politically programmed church services, or refuses to submit his children to "committed" in-school instruction of this kind?

Günter Grass has stated that the operation of these *Wähler-initiativen* has brought the first phase to a successful end, and the next task is to activate citizens politically during electoral interludes as well. Yes indeed! Those who deem themselves the political instructors of the nation will be plunging it into a state of escalating political conflict, for it is on this form of political excitement that their power of political leadership depends. Alien to this conception of democracy is the idea that others do not have the time, or the inclination, to busy themselves constantly with problems of political leadership whose solution they are not qualified to attempt either by personal responsibility or by expert knowledge. They have their own work to perform and only like to review their faith in or their mistrust of the government "from time to time" (to quote the provision in the Mayflower Compact, surely one of the basic documents of modern democracy).

Commitment as Pressure or Prejudice

THE LAST GERMAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN is not alone in providing abundant examples of the way in which this trend towards "More Democracy" is destroying the depoliticising separation of powers and, thus, objective social responsibility. Industrialists and senior business executives increasingly regard it as their "political duty" to concern themselves not only with productivity and economic growth but also with "political dedication" to the political foundations of the economy. On the other side, trade unions are with growing frequency intervening in political decisions and government administration, whether it be that a policemen's union threatens to cease to serve "fiscal penalty notices", or discontinue other civil law functions, unless the Government adopts some political measure after the union's heart, or whether sections of the Government bloc (their hopes of trade-union cooperation obviously well founded) threaten to mobilise the unions against political decisions taken by their own Government coalition.

Although justified exception was taken to the covert but effective influence of private industry upon CDU-led governments, overt trade-union encroachment on SPD governmental responsibilities is barely noticeable. Let us not be deceived. Franz-Josef Strauss's critical verdict on the current policy of the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*—I deliberately venture to quote the confrontation between argument and passion in his remark: "The personal and professional omnicompetence of a particular group and the pluralism (based on the separation of powers) of our society are mutually incompatible"—is shared not only by CDU politicians but also, in essence, by all leading German liberals (Riemer, Friderichs, Maihofer, Schiller). It also informs the criticism by Willy Brandt (and the SPD leadership) of

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certain trade union campaigns to exert pressure on government decisions.

But this dismantling of the separation of powers can be observed in other spheres, *e.g.* that of the Judiciary. The growing party-politicisation of justice has been disavowed by one *Land* government with the disarmingly candid counter-claim that, of six Supreme Court vacancies, it had filled *only two* with party-political sympathisers. Does this mean that the other four went to representatives of the other two parties? And may I, as a plaintiff, seek out the court that matches my own political hue? In the case of suits which affect social interests, the political commitment (and, thus, the prejudice) of the presiding judge must surely be relevant. Taken to extremes, this development might entail party-political commitment on the part of "democratised" *Bundeswehr* generals, field-grade officers, NCOs and plain soldiers who would decide which form of Federal German social system and political constitution they were prepared to defend and which not. I shall refrain from enumerating further examples of this "democratising" tendency and only stress that my main objection is that it distorts the functions of the manifold bodies which comprise a freely constituted society.

THERE IS A PROPOSAL, clearly stemming from Chancellor Willy Brandt himself, to publish an exposé of the influence—illegitimate from the viewpoint of "separated powers"—which was exerted on the *Bundestag* election campaign by industrialists in the private sector. This deserves a warm welcome from all supporters of a liberal separation of powers. It would, however, be grossly mistaken to entrust such a task of documentation to a political party itself, *viz.* the SPD, and allow its verdict to be predetermined by the postulate of a "class struggle from above." Any such undertaking could only result in increased polarisation; and I cannot bring myself to impute such an intention to Chancellor Brandt.

If group pressure has weakened and stunted free democratic opinion-shaping by the parties, and if documentation of this process is to curb and restrict illegitimate claims to power, we must examine the relationship between legitimate political opinion-shaping by all the parties and the influence wielded during the last election campaign by all groups and institutions not constitutionally entitled to such influence. This, it seems to me, is an issue fundamental to our parliamentary democracy. It would be the duty of the *Bundestag* President to publish the facts in a party-politically neutral document as a warning to those engaged in future elections. But no such demand would be justified unless one credits the *Bundestag* President with the duty to preserve democratic and free political opinion-shaping in general, and refrains from seeing it as an institution devoted to "chairing negotiations."

WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING in "polarisation," therefore, is a weakening of the Federal Republic's liberal foundations. Correct as it was to conclude that liberalism had found a home in all democratic parties and was not confined to one self-styled "liberal" party, it is clear that this universal acceptance has been accompanied by a blunting of principles and greater vulnerability of the liberal foundations of our political constitution. This applies to all democratic parties including the one that expressly wears the "liberal" label. Not only are they all, in varying degrees, at the mercy of "polarisation", but they actually contribute to it. Also, they are all operating in an increasingly illiberal way.

Since it is this approach by the parties that will determine the Federal Republic's future in the coming decade, I may be permitted to add a brief account of party attitudes to the dilemma of Democratisation *versus* the Separation of Powers. First, however, I should point out that any mitigation of the totalitarian tendency latent in the "democratisation" principle is primarily a thorn in the flesh of the opponents of a free democratic system, and that these would-be Abolitionists of the System have a powerful interest in excessive "democratisation." But this is not the point at issue. In answer to inevitable objections from certain quarters that my attitude is "anti-democratic", let me again stress that my concern is to achieve a balance between the principles of Democracy and Separation of Powers in their capacity as the twin pillars of our constitution and social system.

Basic Weaknesses in All Three Parties

DURING the 1950s, particularly in their first decade in office, the CDU possessed a strong liberal wing which made its influence felt chiefly in the fields of economic and judicial policy (*e.g.* Ludwig Erhard, Franz Böhm). Having lost this for reasons of age, it has never replaced it with liberals of similar calibre. There has, on the other hand, been a distinct recession in the influence wielded by the anti-liberal forces within it, *e.g.* the various church councils. This is shown

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by the churches' relinquishment of "social tutelage" over parents in educational matters or their abstention from electoral appeals in support of one particular party. Coupled with other factors, these two developments have led to a basic weakness which forces the CDU to operate more pragmatically and tactically than befits a party in opposition. It has thus been unable, so far, to counter the principle of increasing "democratisation" by cogently advancing the principles on which a free system reposes. Instead, it often takes its cue from the other side, and so makes its own contribution to polarisation and the growth of conflict. The party has hitherto failed to realise that the intellectual and political foundations which characterised the policy of the democratic parties during the post-War phase of reconstruction—today termed "Restoration" by forgetful critics—have ceased to bear any weight since the end of the 1960s. It is necessary to revert to the deep and basic positions precisely because West German society is no longer dominated either by the imperative needs of reconstruction or by the ideological-political alignments (and their vocabulary) which unquestionably derived from an ideological front against World War II and the years of Nazism.

OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES in Federal Germany, the SPD may certainly be regarded as the vanguard of the "democratisation" tendency. That is why we have justly linked the trend towards democratisation with Willy Brandt's 1969 statement of principle ("let us risk more democracy"). The conflict between these principles nonetheless recurs with great sharpness inside the SPD as well. It is already commonplace to predict that the 1972 victory at the polls will test the Party's tensile strength in the next few years. Superficially described as a conflict between the "Left" and "Right" wings, however, this conflict not only relates to a clash between moderate and orthodox Marxist socialists but testifies that the tendencies of totalitarian democracy (as Talmon once called it) are incompatible with the liberal views which largely took up residence in the SPD after 1945. What is occurring inside the SPD is a repetition, on the internal party level, of the conflict between liberal elements (mainly of the older generation), who participated in the liberal-democratic reconstruction of the Federal Republic and prized a system based on the separation of powers precisely because they themselves had long been excluded from a share in supreme government authority and younger elements who, being uninterested in such "liberal" freedoms because they take their heritage for granted and exploit it, aspire to social-political change *via* the centralistic accumulation of powers.

It is apparent that the SPD elders—like the CDU in relation to other parties—have a very limited ability to uphold their fundamental and (in terms of government policy, specific) responsibility against the ideological democratisers and the neo-orthodox Marxists. They are just as much compelled to adopt "tactical" means of asserting their authority as the Opposition—a recourse which automatically brands *them* as part of the implausible "Establishment." The SPD is experiencing a recurrence of the almost century-old dilemma. Its alternatives are a party of Class Struggle and a new version of a pragmatic Reform party. However, no one person can embody August Bebel and Karl Liebknecht, on the one hand, and Ferdinand Lassalle and Eduard Bernstein on the other—as Willy Brandt is trying to do. Herbert Wehner most clearly defined the polarisation of the democratic parties when (in an excited debate) he contemptuously shouted to the Opposition: "*We don't need you!*" The irony was that he did indeed require Opposition approval for the important matter in hand. To sum up, political tenets are quite as ill-defined in the SPD as elsewhere, and the conflict of principle I have described will develop inside the party with just as much rigidity and polarity.

HARDEST TO ASSESS from this aspect is the FDP. On the one hand, it appears that this party of avowed liberals deliberately wishes to preserve the balance between Democratisation and Separation of Powers inherent in what I have termed the Federal Republic's free democratic basic system. If so, the FDP would be the party most logically qualified to actualise the political foundations upon which the Federal Republic's brief history reposes. On the other hand, fundamental lack of principle can be perceived just as clearly here as elsewhere. The fragmentation of the liberals into National liberals, Social liberals, and Left liberals demonstrates that the essence of liberalism has long ago yielded to a political consensus which liberals share with other parties and which are no longer exclusive. The National liberals are primarily nationalistic in outlook, the social liberals primarily *sozial* (or even *sozialistisch*), the Left liberals primarily "*links*." The same criticism applies to the FDP's definitive "*Freiburger Programm*." Thanks to its "intellectual father", Professor Werner Maihofer, this pays homage to all of liberalism's fundamental positions in theoretical and academic terms. From the aspect of current Federal Republican practice, however, it restricts itself to a social-economic system in which democratisation acquires predominance over a neglected liberal separation of powers. It represents a social programme which, though tempered by

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its liberal background, will tend to fit better—as polarisation advances—into moderate socialisation than into a liberally assured institutional separation of powers.

No liberal party whose store of principle is historically reducible to old Friedrich Naumann, but which forgets 19th-century liberal strictures on the perils of *Massendemokratie*, can pay due heed to the problem of individual liberty in our form of society. It fails to see that liberalism's basic requirement is fulfilled, not by democracy or measures based on "social justice", but by the creation of those *pouvoirs neutres* which divide authority and thereby control it. A liberal like Karl Popper recognised more than two decades ago that, in our society, individual liberty is purveyed by "good" institutions; and that only on the basis of a liberal open society can we effectively pursue goals of greater social equity. Few present members of the FDP display any such insight into the significance of institutions. So the party has scant right to look down, with its mixture of commiseration and indulgence, on the basic weaknesses of the other democratic parties. It certainly does not owe its electoral success to the clarity and definition of its principles. Discounting the effective performance of its government representatives (in political spheres which are not, in fact, connected with the party's basic programme of "social policy"), that success is better attributed to its general indecision and hesitancy which are emotionally shared by certain electoral groups involved in the basic conflict of polarisation.

The Vortex of Social Policy

NOT BEING A POLITICIAN, I am not duty bound to cultivate optimism.

My analysis of the political situation and forces prevailing in the West German Federal Republic reveals that the principle of increased "democratisation" will almost inevitably govern the policy of all parties. It will thereby intensify political conflicts and foster "polarisation." The generally accepted magic formula for this process will be the *Gesellschaftspolitik*, the "social policy", espoused by all parties. This is a term drawn from the crypto-totalitarian vocabulary of sociological provenance, similar to the term "People's Democracy" and profoundly illiberal, both linguistically and in fact—because any wish to engulf "society", as a whole, in the maw of public policy and to subject it to systematic change is in itself a totalitarian concept. If such a policy is pursued in principle by all German democratic parties, all social forces and institutions will necessarily be reduced to the common denominator of party-political and civil confrontations. They will thus become embroiled in the polarising process which will increasingly develop into a conflict between pluralistic party claims to totality.

Such, alas, is the foreseeable future of the Federal Republic. The era of relatively unbroken domestic social and political peace is at an end. West German citizens who are now over 40 may well very soon look back on the two decades bounded by 1949 and 1969 as the "golden"—the politically most peaceful—years of their life.

Learning paranoia

I hate father. I'm not allowed to say
I hate father. I hate mother then.
But I love mother (I love father too).
I must hate someone.

I hate myself? I love myself! I'm not allowed
To talk about myself. I need a myth
Of someone loving, powerful and hated.
So I hate Mr Smith,

The boss. He keeps me down. He pays too little,
Puts acid in my tea,
Works for the Mafia, steals my women. You—
How dare you mention Mr Smith to me?

Laurence Lerner

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

How Serious are "Pollsters"?

Mark Abrams

THE MOST STRIKING ASSERTION in Mr Crossman's review of the Teer and Spence book [ENCOUNTER, October] seems to me to be capable of considerable misunderstanding. He states: "The questions in these five political opinion polls are decided by the editors of the papers which finance them, and the reports are composed expressly to provide the right kind of news stories for the papers in which they appear."

My own experience with editors when I was with Research Services was very different. Our published political polls were carried out for *Picture Post*, the *Daily Graphic*, *The Observer*, and *Socialist Commentary*. To say that the editors of these publications "decided" the questions to be included in any of the Research Services polls is to give the word "decided" a very unusual connotation. What, in fact, happened was that we met to discuss a questionnaire drafted by me and the contents of the draft emerged from my own understanding of which issues were currently politically important—important in the sense that the way they were handled by the Government and the Opposition might well affect the voting behaviour of large sections of the electorate. No great skills were required for this. At almost any time over the past twenty-five years any reasonably intelligent person with at least a modest interest in politics knew that many electors held strong views about rising prices, unemployment, selective education, coloured immigrants, housing, the Common Market, the competence and behaviour of party leaders, welfare benefits, nationalisation, etc, and that these views would affect the way they voted. Pre-poll meetings with editors were almost invariably brief and amiable; and this, I like to believe, was because they felt they could leave decisions about questions to those who were experts in polls.

The same could not always be said about those who commissioned the unpublished polls which were carried out for the political parties. The vetting of questionnaires was often long and repetitive, and from time to time it was necessary to resist demands to include questions which were very marginal to the main political debate between the two major parties—for example, questions about the "image" of threatening colleagues.

As to the second charge (the "angling" of reports), again the charge seems to me unfounded. My own published reports tended to be brief and flat and written largely for the benefit of people who experienced difficulty with tables of figures. The text was, for the most part, along the lines of "Three-quarters of all the people interviewed said that rising prices constitute the most serious problem now facing the country", or "Nine people out of every ten say that party political broadcasts are boring." (I learned to write this way when I found that many journalists were allergic to statistics in simple tables.)

Obviously one tried to give the material a "lead-in appeal" that would probably interest the readers of a particular publication. For example, for readers of the *Observer* findings about the electorate's views on Mr Enoch Powell or results showing that middle-class voters were moving either leftward or rightward were "the right kind of news stories" with which to lead. Or again, for readers of *Socialist Commentary* the "right kind" of surveys and reports were those which offered to explain why the Labour Party had lost three General Elections in a row, and might well lose yet another.

It is possible that Mr Crossman is using the phrase "right kind of news stories" in a more sinister sense, *i.e.* that the material is twisted by the pollsters so as to serve the political self-interest of the publishers who finance them. Quite apart from the fact that any pollster foolish enough to follow such a policy would very quickly lose the trust (and finance) of all his other clients, there is the difficulty of recognising where self-interest lies. At the last General Election newspapers with more-or-less Labour Party sympathies published opinion poll findings with such headlines as "LABOUR—BY 100?" or "TORIES REELING" or "MASSIVE SWING TO LABOUR." It is probable that headlines such as these generated Labour Party complacency and contributed to the Party's defeat.

May I also comment on some minor points in Mr Crossman's review?

1. Research Services was founded in 1946 not 1951. *2.* I left Research Services at the end of 1969. *3.* I do not do any survey work for P.E.P. *4.* Various studies of single constituencies support the view that in General Elections the personal vote for a candidate is of little importance—*e.g.*

MARK ABRAMS *has been Director of the Social Science Research Council's Survey Unit since 1970, and before that was Chairman of Research Services, Ltd. His books include "Social Surveys and Social Action" (1951).*

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R. S. Milne & H. C. Mackenzie (*Straight Fight*, the Bristol N.E. at 1951 Election) found that in a total sample of 760 respondents only 5 referred to the personality, ability, or behaviour of a candidate as affecting their vote. *5.* The unreliability of by-elections as "a microcosm of the general election" is notorious. As recent by-elections have shown, discontented electors vote for the candidate most likely to defeat the candidate representing the Government party.

Humphrey Taylor

ONE OF MY LESS ENJOYABLE TASKS has been to report from time to time the results of polls showing how little confidence and trust many people have in politicians. I find this depressing, as I believe that most politicians are more dedicated, honest, and public-spirited than people think. It is often suggested that politicians are less well regarded now than they were in the past. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to prove or disprove this claim (but I find it hard to think of a decade, as opposed to odd moments, when politicians were popular).

Why are politicians so disliked and distrusted? Perhaps it is inevitable in a democratic system where politicians have to produce competing manifestos which usually offer more than they can achieve. Perhaps, as the ruling clique, they are no more unpopular than rulers anywhere taking the blame fairly or unfairly for the grievances of society. Perhaps it is the way they are treated by the press. Partly, I suspect, it is a question of style. The style of political debate and of the hustings too often involves exaggerated and unfair attacks on opponents, the exaggeration and distortion of a point in an argument, and a general reluctance to discuss issues unemotionally and on their merits. It is partly a game, of course, but not one that appeals to those who are not players.

Mr Crossman chooses to play this game in his review-article of *Political Opinion Polls* by two of my competitors, Frank Teer and James Spence. Apart from a few small but irritating mistakes of fact, I thought it an excellent book for those wanting a sensible understanding of the strengths and limitations of polls. Mr Crossman chose not to review it sensibly. Having decided to attack the polls and pollsters (and newspaper proprietors and editors, and David Butler, for good measure), Mr Crossman slipped easily into his House of Commons technique—ignore the substance, fasten on to two or three things which were said (or written), misinterpret, distort, or exaggerate their meaning to make them appear ridiculous, then administer the *coup de grâce*.

HUMPHREY TAYLOR *is Managing Director of Louis Harris International and its British subsidiary Opinion Research Centre, which he founded. He has been responsible for several hundred published political opinion polls, first at N.O.P. and then at O.R.C. (including the only poll predicting a Conservative victory at the 1970 General Election).*

MR CROSSMAN'S MOST SERIOUS CRITICISM of the polls is based on the sentence in the book that "the topics examined by a poll will in general be those which the client newspaper considers to be of editorial interest." He interprets this as meaning "the questions in the five political opinion polls are decided by the editors of the papers which finance them, and the reports are composed expressly to provide the right kind of news stories for the papers in which they appear." Mark Abrams, without any of my obvious irritation, disposes quietly and effectively of this argument which is, of course, complete nonsense.

Another wild misinterpretation is Mr Crossman's claim that "in order to save money their employers (he means the newspaper editors) insist on them using devices which substantially increase the sampling error." He was referring to the use of the "clustering" which enables a poll to survey a much larger sample than it could with an "unclustered" sample. In my experience, which includes polls done for eight major papers and 12 editors over ten years, editors never dictate the techniques used; but they and the pollsters have a common interest in making the polls as accurate and as cost-effective as possible (unfashionable as cost-effectiveness may be). The use of clustering allows pollsters to interview a much larger sample for any given sum of money, thus *reducing* the sampling error. To eliminate clustering entirely, as Mr Crossman seems to advocate, would mean using very small samples and a much increased sampling error, within any given budget. Mr Crossman seems genuinely to have misunderstood the whole discussion of sampling. He refers to "the inevitable sampling error", when of course it is only inevitable that a few polls, say five in every 100, will be seriously distorted by sampling error, as distinct from other, human sources of error.

RUNNING THROUGH THE ARTICLE is the characteristic hostility of the politicians to the press. To Mr Crossman, it follows that if the polls are, as he argues, the creatures of newspaper editors they are, at best, worthless. This may sound strange coming from a journalist and ex-editor, unless one has seen with one's own eyes the

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world of political journalists and politicians. It is a strange, symbiotic relationship. Each needs, cultivates and uses the other. But each sees and knows too much about the other's failings to respect him or accept him at face value. This curious relationship has a major impact on our political system, and would merit a serious analysis, which Mr Crossman, with his experience and talents—if not his detachment—would be well qualified to perform.

But the hostility of many politicians to Opinion Polls is not just based on their publication in newspapers which they distrust. Polls often irritate and annoy politicians and members of political parties, and will always do so. There are several reasons for this. No party can be expected to thank a poll which shows it is losing an election. Politicians are afraid, despite the lack of any evidence, of the band-waggon effect and of the impact of polls on the morale of their party workers. And, after an election has been lost, the polls offer an easy scapegoat—"they misled us", "they made our supporters complacent."

If a poll is published during a party conference, it is sometimes seen as a "plot" to undermine it. If no poll is published, it is seen as a "plot" to hide its popularity. But there is a more serious reason why politicians dislike us. They claim to represent the electorate. They also claim to know, understand, and interpret the wishes of the voters. The polls make this claim too, and thereby undermine those who say they speak on behalf of the people when they are really voicing the demands of only a small section.

The polls not only undermine the politician's claim to represent the electorate, they also cast doubt on his ability to understand it, to predict how it will react to events, and to influence it. The only two unswervingly hostile audiences I have faced were both composed of prominent local councillors who listened stony-faced as I tried to tell them something about the attitudes of the electorate to local government.

When I produced data showing that less than 3% of voters could name a councillor who represented them, a Tory from Teesside was loudly cheered when he attacked me and said that every one of his several thousand constituents knew him.

A more topical example was the "centre party" poll (by the Opinion Research Centre) in 1972 which indicated enormous potential support for a party drawing less-committed supporters away from the two main parties. Everything that has happened to the Liberal vote since then has fully justified this conclusion. Yet at the time it was bitterly attacked as an attempt to "manipulate" public opinion, not report it.

On another occasion, a Labour M.P. hotly contested my conclusion that most Labour voters, like most other voters, were more interested in prices, unemployment, and taxation than they were in ending the Viet Nam War. That was one of many hundreds of instances when the polls have shown that the attitudes and priorities of those who vote for a party are very different from those who are active within it. I believe that one of the beneficial effects of the polls is that they have done something to balance and reduce the influence of the right wing of the Conservative Party and of the left wing of the Labour Party. The polls provide the only feedback on the views of the true silent majority on trade union reform, the Common Market, nationalisation, prices and incomes policy, and all the other issues of the day. We could not do this if Mr Crossman was accurate in saying that the pollster "is only a high-class tipster, valued not for anything interesting he has to discover, but for his success in backing winners."

I REGRET that the article was so taken up with ridiculing the polls and attacking Fleet Street, that it never discussed the role of public opinion surveys in British politics. It would have been fascinating to have had Mr Crossman's view on how polls affect the morale and behaviour of members of Parliament and party chiefs, on their effect on the reporting and discussion of politics by the media, on whether they strengthen or weaken the position of a Prime Minister or Opposition party leader, on whether they have influenced the way the parties have handled issues such as trade-union reform and the Common Market, and on how they have influenced election tactics and party strategy. There is no mention of what is probably the most important political change brought about by polling, the ability they give to Prime Ministers to choose a better time for an election, thus giving a sharp tilt in the balance of power in favour of the Government of the day.

Before I read the review-article I had hoped that the Teer/Spence book might help to make politicians and journalists better informed about polls, and better able to interpret and comment on them. But, if Mr Crossman is typical (I suppose he seldom is), I fear the reverse may be true.

Finally, may I, like Mark Abrams, correct some factual points in the review?

1. Marplan was founded long before 1968.
2. Marplan does not publish polls in *The Times*, and has not done so since 1970. *The Times* publishes the *Times–ITN* poll carried out by O.R.C.
3. Beaverbrook Newspapers have no financial interest in the Harris Poll.

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R. H. S. Crossman

THIS CONCERTED and highly disingenuous attack by two of our leading pollster bosses bewilders me. They try to write me off as one of those politicians who are hopelessly biased against political polling and then adduce in evidence quotations from my review of *Political Opinion Polls*. What they do not reveal to the reader are the frank and critical comments by Teer and Spence (both of whom have worked in poll organisations) on which my remarks were entirely based. Since some of those who now can read Messrs Taylor and Abrams' effusions may have forgotten or not read the October number of ENCOUNTER where my article appeared, some reply is necessary. It is only necessary to quote in full the key passages in *Political Opinion Polls* on which I relied for my contention that political polling as it is at present organised has much more to do with Fleet Street journalism than with scientific enquiry. The first states the difference in principle:

> "Unlike academic enquiries whose objectives will be to reach a basic understanding of the mainsprings of opinion, the pollster's function is simply to report that opinion as succinctly as possible. He is seldom concerned with its depth, intensity or origin because his work is not undertaken to help decide what action should be taken but merely to report the existing opinion for publication as a news story."

The second explains the key role of the editor in deciding the content of the questionnaire.

> "The end use of the poll primarily affects the depth of questioning on any topic. The newspapers' needs and the consequent limitation on space devoted to opinion poll reporting mean that any issue examined by the polls will be dealt with at a relatively superficial level. The analysis will also be severely limited to the main aspects of the finding for the same reason. The requirements of the client will also govern the content of an opinion poll questionnaire. The topics examined by a poll will in general be those which the client newspaper considers to be of editorial interest. . . ."

It would have been fair enough for Messrs Taylor and Abrams to take issue with the authors of *Polittival Opinion Polls* and dispute their highly controversial statements. What is not fair is to try to destroy their importance by attributing them to me!

Now to a more detailed point—the technique of "clustering", Mr Taylor describes as "a wild exaggeration" my claim that "in order to save money the newspaper editors insist on them using devices which substantially increase the sampling error." Again I must refer him to the text of the book. On p. 29 Messrs Teer and Spence write: "Because of these practical difficulties *and the resulting high cost* [my italics] the opinion poll organisations concentrate their interviews in a limited number of constituencies." On p.30 they go on:

> "Stratification improves the efficiency of the sample but clustering the interviews, within a selection of constituencies, though necessary for practical reasons has the opposite effect. Unfortunately for the researcher clustering exercises the dominant influence, with the result that many of the estimates made from these samples are subject to sampling errors greater than those which would be derived from simple random samples."

And on p.31:

> "The extent of this increased variance depends on the variable being measured. But for social class and voting intention the sampling error is increased by a factor (known as the *design factor*) of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$."

Again everything is attributed to the wicked politician who wrote the review, whereas the grave charges are made by the two professional pollsters who wrote the book.

Mr Taylor then proceeds to accuse me of prejudice not only against the polls to which at the beginning of my review I urge politicians to give more attention, but also against the press. His tortuous argument is worth quoting.

> "To Mr Crossman, it follows that if the polls are, as he argues, the creatures of newspaper editors they are at best worthless."

Nowhere in my article do I call them "at best worthless" and, in fact, I find them quite useful. Nor, for very obvious reasons, do I believe that an outside contributor who works for an editor must become his creature. The reason why I greeted this excellent book so warmly and at such length is because politicians and journalists who read it will be able to make better use of the polls when they recognise them for what they are and what Messrs Teer and Spence call "yet another aspect of journalism." I can understand that Messrs Abrams and Taylor regard this as degradation. As a journalist I greet them as hitherto secret but now unveiled members of our fraternity. I hope they won't be too unkind to Messrs Teer and Spence for revealing their secrets.

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London

A POLICEMAN *came to the door [Lady James writes] one Saturday evening last May and said: "I regret to inform you that your son has met with a fatal accident."*

My son, Luke Potter (his father was the late Stephen Potter) was at a boarding school and later that night the head master told me that he had thrown himself out of a window. He was 16 years old.

The year before he had run away from school because he was rebelling against the Establishment and I found out that he had been smoking pot.

At the inquest several pupils confirmed that he had not been overworking. One said that he liked to lie on his bed reading "not always school books." The disappointment over the girl they said was slight, but two said my son told them separately that he was on a "bad trip." Verdict: Death by misadventure whilst under the influence of drugs.

The children are being brainwashed. They are being told that intelligent people take drugs and that those who do not are unimaginative fuddy-duddies.

My son was influenced by Aldous Huxley's book on mescalin, and the false profundity of Tim Leary's on LSD. A few months before he died he had told my daughter that he had tried both drugs and that she should read Tim Leary's book "to broaden her mind".

Similar words were quoted by one of the witnesses at the inquest. My son wanted to be a writer and I am sure that he felt drugs would help him more than education.

SUNDAY EXPRESS

London

SOUNDS: **"Redistribution, Partnership, Devolution, Decentralisation, Participation" are the words embroidered on the Liberal banner. They do not have the ring of the earlier Liberal slogan "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." In fact they ring with the sound of a blancmange disturbed by a plastic spoon. But that is perhaps less the fault of the Liberal Party than of the deplorable condition into which the vocabulary of politics has fallen.**

THE TIMES

New York

FATHER & SON: *"I hate poetry," said Michael Yeats, chairman of the senate of the Republic of Ireland, barrister and only son of William Butler Yeats. "Of course, I don't hate poetry," he said, "but I can't say that I'm particularly interested in it."*

The poet's son said that he had no particular favourites among his father's poetry but that he had one unchallenged unfavourite.

"That was 'Prayer for My Son'," he said. "It was written after my birth in 1921, and the other boys at St Columba's School used to recite it, knowing it would drive me to a fury."

The poet had a lifelong interest in spiritualism, the occult and astrology, other interests that his son does not share. "I'm sure he had a horoscope cast when I was born," he said. "I may even have it, but I can't say that I've ever looked at it. As to ghosts, I'll believe in them the day I see one. I'm afraid I lack imagination in that direction."

Though his father's study was closed to him and his sister when he was working, Mr. Yeats recalled, there were occasions when he would work in public places.

"He would make a sort of queer, low-pitched humming noise," he said. "They were the kind of noises that when he made them on a bus someone might come up to him and ask him if he were ill. When he composed his verses, before he wrote anything down, he had to be satisfied that it sounded right. My mother told us at a very early age: 'When your father makes that kind of noise, just stop whatever you're doing and be still'."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

40 × BLOODY: *The word "bloody" was used 40 times in a recent play on BBC1 television, Sir Gilbert Longden told the Commons standing committee dealing with the Cinematograph and Indecent Displays Bill yesterday.*

It was interesting that no one minded the use of the word "bloody" any more, yet when it was first used on the London stage about 60 years ago, in George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion", it had shocked the entire nation.

The use of the word then had been the first step in a downward spiral.

Apart from the "bloodies" in the television play there had been 26 other offensive remarks.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

CULTURAL EXCHANGE: *Out in the suburb of Stony Brook, Long Island, browsers in the library have been looking very startled at some of the titles on the shelves. Books like "The Red Detachment of Women" and "On the Long March with Chairman Mao," not to mention "Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy" (an opera, would you believe) and "New Archaeological Finds in China."*

Stony Brook's librarian has not taken leave of his senses. This was chosen as the first library to participate in an exchange of books between America and Red China. Meanwhile, at the National Library in Peking, similarly startled ladies and gentlemen in little grey suits are trying to figure out "Houses and House Life of the American Aborigines" and "The American Beaver and his Works."

The deal seems to be that Americans get told about the inevitable thoughts of the worthy Chairman, plus librettos and choreography of Chinese operas and ballets, along with the odd volume on acupuncture. The Chinese will, in their turn, be drawing a picture in their heads of a Continent infested with small, furry animals, where the population speaks aborigine and Iroquois and studies basic sociology.

DAILY MAIL

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LETTERS

Barzun & Rousseau

JACQUES BARZUN's interesting article, "Educational Disputes" (November), significantly comes under the heading *Men & Ideas;* for having made a passing reference to Locke's maxim about educating girls like boys, he proceeds to the statement that "Rousseau's outlook is obviously much wider.... It is a man capable of spiritual contentment and social self-respect anywhere that Rousseau hopes to develop."

The fact that Rousseau's *Emile* conspicuously leaves out women from this state of social self-respect does not concern Professor Barzun. It greatly concerned Mary Wollstonecraft, whose *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was largely devoted to a brilliant refutation of Rousseau's "male aristocracy" as she termed it, as well as setting out a blueprint for national education of both sexes in state schools.

> "All the ideas of women, which have not the immediate tendency to points of duty [wrote Rousseau] should be directed to the study of men, and to the attainment of those agreeable accomplishments which have taste for their object; for as to works of genius, they are beyond their capacity; neither have they sufficient precision or power of attention to succeed in sciences...."

It is Mary Wollstonecraft's resistance to this theory of women educated only to be man's "toy, his rattle", that forms much of the substance of her book. She claimed "the *knowledge* of the two sexes should be the same in nature... and that women, considered not only as moral but rational creatures, ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the *same* means as men, instead of being educated like a fanciful kind of *half* being—one of Rousseau's wild chimeras." Until women were more rationally educated, the progress of human knowledge must receive continual checks. In her proposed national schools co-education, and even the early dressing of girls and boys alike (a theory much propagated in Sweden today), would be used to demonstrate how much the disparate achievements of the sexes were based on artificial distinctions in childhood. Indeed she challenged Rousseau on his own ground, by an ingenious twist of his chosen weapon:

> " 'Educate women like men', says Rousseau, 'and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us'. This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves."

I would agree entirely with Professor Barzun that popular translation of writers' ideas is usually a distortion of what those ideas actually were, and based not on reading of the original book but on "prefabricated knowledge." Mary Wollstonecraft's works, which not only analyse women's position in society but also the defects in the whole political and social system on which that society is built, have been particularly subject to this procedure. But *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* cannot be left out of any serious discussion of the literature of education.

London AUDREY WILLIAMSON

MISS WILLIAMSON, like her authority Mary Wollstonecraft, is really too selective in her representation of Rousseau. Both give the impression that he denied women genius and the intellectual means to self-respect—just another male bigot (Chauvin was not yet born). The truth is that the long Book V of *Emile* is a complex, closely reasoned view of women's education, based on the premise that men and women are equal—indeed, identical—in everything not influenced by what we now call biology. Rousseau knows and says that it is very difficult to be sure what is thus influenced. But having "the same faculties" women must not be reared ignorant and housebound. Their minds are "subtle and delightful" and they must be taught to "think, judge, know, and appreciate" all intellectual things.

The fact that he assumed most women would continue economically dependent on men is, I agree, monstrous. But then he had not heard from General Bonaparte about careers open to talent; in 1762 they were not even open to men. Nor had the socially emancipating factory, typewriter, and department store been invented. But although abstract ideas are not sufficiently self-propelling, the models were vivid enough. Rousseau's Julie in *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* the book that enraptured Mary W.'s posthumous son-in-law Shelley, is charming and learned, discusses Plato's *Republic* with her tutor-lover, and amazes her father with what she knows. Only geometry is off her programme—I leave reformers of all sexes to guess why.

In view of all this, to make of Mary Wollstonecraft a pioneer educational theorist who "refuted Rousseau" is more than a little partial. And there is more: twelve years before Mary was born, Diderot's essay "On Women" deplored their hard lot and spoke out against the laws and the education that left them to be "treated like retarded children." The Enlightenment—rich in educated women—was for both sexes, as is shown by the passage in 1792 of Condorcet's bill for their equal education. Mary W.'s book of the same year perhaps owes something to her long stay in France. But in England other circles than hers—the Edgeworths, the Wedgwoods—were also concerned about education for women *and* men. Their friend the great Dr Beddoes inveighed against "the studied neglect of women," devised programmes for boys' and girls' schools, and put employment for women "among the greatest desiderata of society."

All these plans and claims can be argued against and criticised. We haven't yet, among men or women, a consensus on sex equality *versus* identity, any more than on school goals and methods. But anyone can make a start and show the world by example, without belabouring those earlier thinkers but for whom the issue itself might not be in our

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minds. For as Rousseau said, nothing even then prevented women from bringing up their daughters as they wished.

JACQUES BARZUN

Columbia University,
New York City

Alien Marx

REGARDING NEIL MCINNES' review of my book, *Alienation*, in your June issue, I can't believe it was either fair or necessary to so distort what I wrote in order to make his political criticism of the left communist opposition. In examining the four kinds of evidence I present to argue my main thesis that Marx has a philosophy of internal relations, McInnes says I give one example to illustrate the first point (when I give three from Marx and one from Engels), neglects to mention that I give four examples to illustrate the second point, labels my third point ambiguous without stating what it is, and dismisses my final point—that Marx's philosopical mentors, Hegel, Leibniz and Spinoza all held a philosophy of internal relations and that Marx never criticised them for these views—with the observation that Marx dedicates *Capital* (I) to Darwin. The bulk of my book is devoted to showing how this interpretation of Marx's dialectic enables us to understand many otherwise confusing elements in his conception of human nature, theory of alienation and labour theory of value. Of this there is no mention.

Despite what McInnes says, I make no claim to be the first person to see a philosophy of internal relations in Marxism (Sartre, Lukács, Goldmann, Lefebvre and others have either alluded to it or assumed its existence) but only to be the first one to systematically work out its implications for Marx's use of language and some of his major theories. Of course to make a judgment on *this* claim, McInnes would have to read the book.

BERTELL OLLMAN

South Lodge,
Rose Lane, Oxford

IT IS NOT *chic* to say that someone has not read your book because they disagree with you. However, one is happy to divert readers with a further sample of B. Ollman's philosophic prose. He complains that I acknowledge only one of the three examples he gives of Marx asserting internal relations. This is the passage (p. 28):

> "Marx makes statements which place him on the side of those who view things as relations. He declares, for example, that 'the thing itself is an objective human relation to itself and to man.' Marx also calls man (who after all has a body as

C. A. R. Crosland's True Answers

POLITICIANS IN *Opposition find it difficult to resist claiming that they have all the answers. Today as the Government staggers drunkenly from crisis to crisis, having apparently lost all grip on affairs, the temptation is particularly strong. But the Labour Party must resist it for two good reasons.*

First, because it would be quite dishonest to make any such claim. For Labour to claim now that we have an instant cure to the baffling problem of how to combine growth and full employment with steady prices and a healthy balance of payments would be as deceitful as Mr Heath's "at-a-stroke" pledge of 1970. I hope that a Labour Government would improve on Mr Heath's performance over inflation —for example, by preferring to subsidise essentials such as food rather than non-essentials such as telephones; though there are still serious gaps in our own policies for prices and incomes. But Britain's economic problems are deep-seated and intractable; and it would be wholly wrong to pretend that one wave of our magic wand will make them disappear.

AND IF, SECONDLY, *we make such claims, nobody will believe us. The last Labour Government did many excellent things; and we spend too much time running it down and too little time reminding the country of its achievements. Nevertheless, it did not solve the central problem of attaining steady growth without inflation. If we claim that next time things will be miraculously different, no one will listen. Already the gap between the main parties' promises and their performance has led to the voters' present flirtation with third parties (though the wildness and inconsistency of the Liberals' by-election pledges make the rest of us seem paragons of reticence and rectitude). We must steadily give the true answer, not the easy one; otherwise a dangerous mood of cynicism would develop.*

The true answer is that we have no panacea for our economic difficulties, and furthermore that we shall probably inherit an acute economic crisis when we take office. So there can be no question of lavish pledges of generous benefits in all directions. We must rigidly select, out of the huge welter of words

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C. A. R. CROSLAND *is Labour M.P. for Grimsby and the Front Bench Shadow Minister for the Environment. These remarks were made at a recent Fabian meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne. His "Open Letter to the Soviet Ambassador" on the Repression of Soviet dissidence was published in December. His "Prospects of Socialism" appeared in the September 1973* ENCOUNTER.

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well as a social significance) the 'assemble (aggregate) of social relations.' Elsewhere this same creature is said to be 'a natural object, a thing, although a living conscious thing'."

Of these three sentences, the first (as Ollman has to concede on the same page) refers to the fetishism of commodities—economic values depend on social relations—and has nothing to do with a philosophy of constitutive relations. The second is the one I criticised in my review. The third says that man is an object, which asserts nothing about internal relations (nor about anything else, incidentally). So the three examples really are one, and a bad one at that. This new glimpse of Ollman's reasoning (and of his grammar, where "assemble" functions as a noun) will not enhance his repeated claim to elucidate "many otherwise confusing" things in Marx. Ollman is infinitely more confusing than Marx.

If others had seen a doctrine of internal relations in Marx, they would not merely have "alluded to it or assumed its existence." They would have said so right out. In which case Ollman, who is an authoritarian name-dropper, would have quoted them. He cannot. He has the dubious distinction of being the first man in history to mistake K. Marx for F. H. Bradley. And no doubt the last.

NEIL MCINNES

Paris

—or Easy Answers

and policies which have poured out of Transport House in the last 12 months, a limited number of priorities and hammer them home to the public from now to the General Election. For at present the voters know what we are *against;* they do not know what we are *for*.

I BELIEVE *there should be five priorities.*

First, an immediate increase in old-age pensions and in help to the disabled and the handicapped.

Secondly, a higher rate of house-building, a policy for containing house prices and rents, and protection for the furnished tenant.

Thirdly, the public ownership of development land (which does not, *contrary to Tory and Liberal innuendoes, mean touching the owner-occupier's freehold).*

Fourthly, the completion of the move towards comprehensive education and the final elimination of the 11-plus.

Lastly, a fierce attack on the extremes of wealth through the taxation of gifts and wealth and a rigid control over commercial property speculation.

These should have the top priority; everything else should take second place. By proclaiming and carrying through a limited but radical programme on these lines, we shall convince the electorate that Labour is different in Government and are not just in Opposition. And we shall take a major step towards creating a more just and equal society.

Anthony Crosland

Sheepish Question

"OTHERS ABIDE our question" is, I suggest, just one of many areas where Matthew Arnold sacrificed precision of meaning for precision of metre. It has always been my intuitive understanding that others abide, or put up with, our *questioning*. That is seeking in the most general sense, quite unlike the specific question which Roy Fuller has discovered. [ENCOUNTER, December 1973].

I am far less confident in another area, uncovered while I was relishing Arnold's epithet "wistful" for sheep.

"No longer leave thy wistful flocks unfed."

After allowing that the typical pasture of a pastoral poet was a hearth rug, would Arnold have been so ignorant of his adoptive pose as to believe that sheep are hand fed? The image of the shepherd as a canteen hand passing out packets of sandwiches to a queue of sheep quite spoils my pleasure in "wistful".

W. H. JOHNSON

South Lodge,
Paxhill,
Lindfield, Sussex

Who Needs Examinations?

IF ONLY IT COULD BE SAID that even the best examinations measured performance against precise objectives [C. B. Cox, ENCOUNTER, April]! Unfortunately an all-too-common experience among former students is of the tacit requirement somehow to crack the examiner's code of criteria rather than to perform to explicit and precise standards. It is the all-too-often hidden nature of this code of criteria which students rightly suspect.

Much could be achieved simply by clarifying course objectives in terms of performance, *i.e.* "distinguish and demonstrate the following literary styles" is a precise objective expressed in terms of performance—whereas "acquire a thorough appreciation of the 19th-century novel" is not. It is often claimed that such demystification of learning objectives will impoverish our culture; that it smacks of the multi-choice question and the programmed text. But this is not the case if we distinguish clearly, in our teaching objectives, between occasions for the communication of knowledge and techniques on the one hand, and occasions for the communication of values on the other. While an essay prepared for the tutorial or seminar (where two-way communication is possible) may be a good test of our ability to determine and exchange values, a good examination question should limit itself to requiring demonstration of knowledge and technique alone. "Doubt . . . about the mimetic function of words" and "scepticism about the forms of behaviour prescribed by institutions" belong to the realm of values. They are values which Professor Cox rejects (although he is attempting to halt what Professor Auerbach, in *Mimesis,* suggested may be a 300-year-old trend). "Hard-work, concentration, self-knowledge, and careful development of the rational faculties" belong, on the other hand, to the realm of knowledge and technique and can be demonstrated.

I venture to suggest that by limiting the traditional examination question explicitly to those areas of

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knowledge and technique for which we can set precise performance objectives, we might help develop wider appreciation for the relative importance of examinations. The final examination is neither a bulwark of social values nor a day of judgment but simply a score-card for measuring our progress in knowledge and technique. And most of us play a better—and more enjoyable—game if (*a*) we keep the score, and (*b*) we know exactly how to play.

INDREI RATIU

Institut Européen
d'Administration des Affaires,
Fontainebleau

I AGREE that the objectives of examinations often need to be explained more carefully to students. But if we only examine knowledge and technique, our students will restrict their studies to these, and will be influenced away from matters of value. This would be a disaster. In my own subject (English) I believe we can make general assessments of a student's quality of mind, and that this is an essential element in the examining process.

C. B. COX

University of Manchester

IQ Justice

MAY I REPLY to the letter of Charles Byass [ENCOUNTER, January]?

What the determination of the average IQ of different racial groups is, or would be, relevant to is the now very widespread assumption that the provision of full equality of opportunity for the members of all such groups indiscriminately can be expected to produce an evenly proportionate distribution of members of those different groups at every occupational level. Conversely, that any deviation from such a perfectly proportionate distribution can be evidence only of the lack of full equality of opportunity.

What can be "helpful towards providing for the special needs of the individual" is of course, as I said, the determination of the IQ of that individual. The point cannot be better made than by repeating my quotation from one of the contributors to that Radical polemic *Race, Culture and Intelligence*: "The first intelligence tests were developed by Binet for the Paris education authorities, to separate the 'dull' children who would not benefit from the education then offered and who needed special education."

ANTONY FLEW

Department of Philosophy,
University of Reading

Thoughts on the Nobel Peace Prize

I AM VERY GRATEFUL *to Le Duc Tho, the spokesman for the warriors of North Viet Nam, for having rejected the Nobel Peace Prize which he was supposed to have shared with Dr Henry Kissinger. To be sure his reasons for this—namely, that the Americans are continuing their aggression in Indo-China—are slightly hypocritical; but then, in the light of the continuing aggression by North Viet Nam's troops in South Viet Nam, he has succeeded in pointing up the ambivalence of the whole Nobel Peace Prize affair. There is at least a fine consistency to the position that no peace prize should be a deterrent to making war.*

Shouldn't, then, the Nobel Peace Prize be abolished? It is now an entirely political transaction, at the moment controlled by the Norwegian parliamentarians of the Left (though they may be of the Centre or Right tomorrow). The award is as "objective" as any calculated decision of a party-political faction. And whoever receives the award for the tranquilising achievements of yesterday is still quite free to go on to whatever bellicose tasks seem more necessary tomorrow.

This is not quite the case with the other Nobel Prize-winners. Selma Lagerlöf, Gerhardt Hauptmann, Romain Rolland, Thomas Mann, Sinclair Lewis, François Mauriac, all went on after taking their awards to write important, or sometimes masterly works of literature. Mediocre writers (like Maeterlinck, Sillanpää, Jiminez, Asturias) went on with their mediocrity. Insignificant figures like Sienkiewisz, Heyse, Jensen, Quasimodo, remained lost in their insignificance.

The case is not unsimilar with the Nobel Prize-winners in other categories. Thomas H. Morgan, after his prize for Medicine, investigated the role of the chromosome in heredity; Adolf Butenandt, a prize-winner for chemistry, went on to isolate the male hormone; the Dutch prize-winner in Physics, Frits Zernike, added to the development of microscopy.

Early on, even before the Peace Prize became a piece of political partisanship, the continuity in the career of the Prize winners had a curious pattern. President Woodrow Wilson "served peace" by presiding over a neutralistic America opposed to the League of Nations. That conspicuously "good man" Arthur Henderson seemed, in his later years, to have no contact at all with the realities of war and peace. Ralph J. Bunche, after his one success as a peace-maker, wanted only to stay out of entangling involvements. And it is no accident that only non-politicians like Fridtjof Nansen or Albert Schweitzer or Father Pire remained uninfluenced by the "personal triumph" of a Peace Prize.

IT STRIKES ME *that there is a contradiction between the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize and genuine service to the public interest. After all, the Prize is*

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Emerson & Thoreau

IT MAY BE base and unworthy, but there is always a certain malicious pleasure in catching someone in an error when he himself is making a great to-do about accuracy and precision.

In your November issue Ludovic Kennedy runs on about using "gunshot" precisely (never, never—dear me!—call a *rifle* wound a gunshot wound). But when he uses a famous quotation himself he (*1*) gets the name of its author wrong, and then (*2*) proceeds to get the quotation itself wrong.

It was not Emerson, as Mr Kennedy says, who made the remark about the (magnetic) telegraph between Maine and Texas. It was Thoreau. As for the quotation itself, I suggest that Mr Kennedy take the trouble to look it up before presuming to use it again.

RICHARD HANSER

Mamaroneck, N.Y.

MR HANSER IS right. I took the quotation on trust from my friend Bernard Levin over an excellent lunch in Soho. He is usually impeccable about sources, but on this occasion lapsed. (It may have been the Sancerre that did it.) I lapsed too in not checking.

LUDOVIC KENNEDY

BBC,
Lime Grove Studios,
London

What Fire, Which Lake

IN THE INTEREST of simple accuracy I must rise to defend Miss Frances Fitzgerald from the petulant attack of M.J.L. in ENCOUNTER, July 1973. ("In the Margin: What Fire, Which Lake?"). His point would appear to be that the true meaning of the Ko Hexagram is closer to the moulting of an animal or bird than to the changes of society, or revolution, and that this distinction has escaped Miss Fitzgerald. He does her no justice. Had he read a little further, albeit with heavy heart and mind (such fortitude), he would have found her write: "The Chinese character for revolution meant in its original sense an animal's pelt, which is changed in the course of a year by moulting." (*Fire in the Lake*, page 31, line 26).

Cambridge, Mass. PETER MAGGS

[ED. NOTE: I did read further, and became increasingly convinced with every highfalutin' reference that the point of a metaphor should be illumination, not obfuscation.—*M.J.L.*]

TO OUR READERS

WE very much regret that, due to circumstances beyond our control, we have not recently been able to publish ENCOUNTER quite as punctually as usual. We hope that this situation will improve in coming months; but if meanwhile your copy arrives a little later than you expect, please forgive us.

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not really given for "peace" in any meaningful sense of the word but rather for the general trappings of "pacificism", and it reinforces in the community of world politics an extreme attitude of peace-at-any-price. The Nobel Peace Prize winner cannot help slipping from a role in which peace is concretely defended to a missionary role, with all the pompous inevitabilities of airy slogans and well-worn clichés. How predictable they all become! Any opponent of world peace can always count on them. Men of such goodness and peace-loving sentiments will hardly ever bring themselves to resist aggression.

BUT WHAT CAN BE DONE *with all the money that Alfred Nobel left, and his instructions to award it year after year? One can't really depend on the chance wisdom which in 1932 resulted in no award to anybody. Surely there is a way out of the dilemma of having the Nobel Prize used for ignoble ends?*

If only institutions were to be the recipients there might be some hope for an end to the unhappy worship of idols and false prophets. I would go further and propose that no persons but only countries should be honoured. The prize should be given to a land, a nation, a society which had demonstrably been of service to peace. I would propose a land which—on the basis of evidence from both Government and Opposition—could claim that in the preceding calendar year nobody had been put in prison because of his political beliefs. Or a land which, although strongly tempted for all the well-known reasons, had not conducted any tests whatsoever with the latest weapons of mass military destruction. Or a land in which it was obvious to all that no discrimination, whether national, religious, or racial, had taken place. Or a land which treated strangers in their midst as their own and treated their own citizens as free human beings with liberty to come and go as they please. Or a land which had made a serious, significant attempt to come to grips with an international evil like the illicit traffic in drugs, or like pollution or criminality or terrorism, and fought it successfully at home. Or a land which, in the face of severe and violent conflicts among its own citizenry, tried with mild, moderate and prudent methods to becalm them and not to intensify them to a "final conflict."

I DO NOT PRETEND *that this list of suggestions is exhaustive. But if a Prize for Peace is not to be an empty phrase of vaguely universal good-will, then it will have to be connected with a recognition that a contribution to "peace" has in the very first place to be part of a genuine effort to establish conditions of peace and freedom at home. The competition for such a Peace Prize may well give rise, in the human way of ambition and envy, to a certain spirit of rivalry—and how much preferable that would be to that spirit of pussy-footing, sentimentally ennobled with pseudo-haloes, which has marked the Oslo affair until now.*

But I am afraid things will go on as they have. One hears that the odds are high that Marshal Josip Broz Tito will be our next Nobel Prize-winner for Peace.

Hans Habe

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